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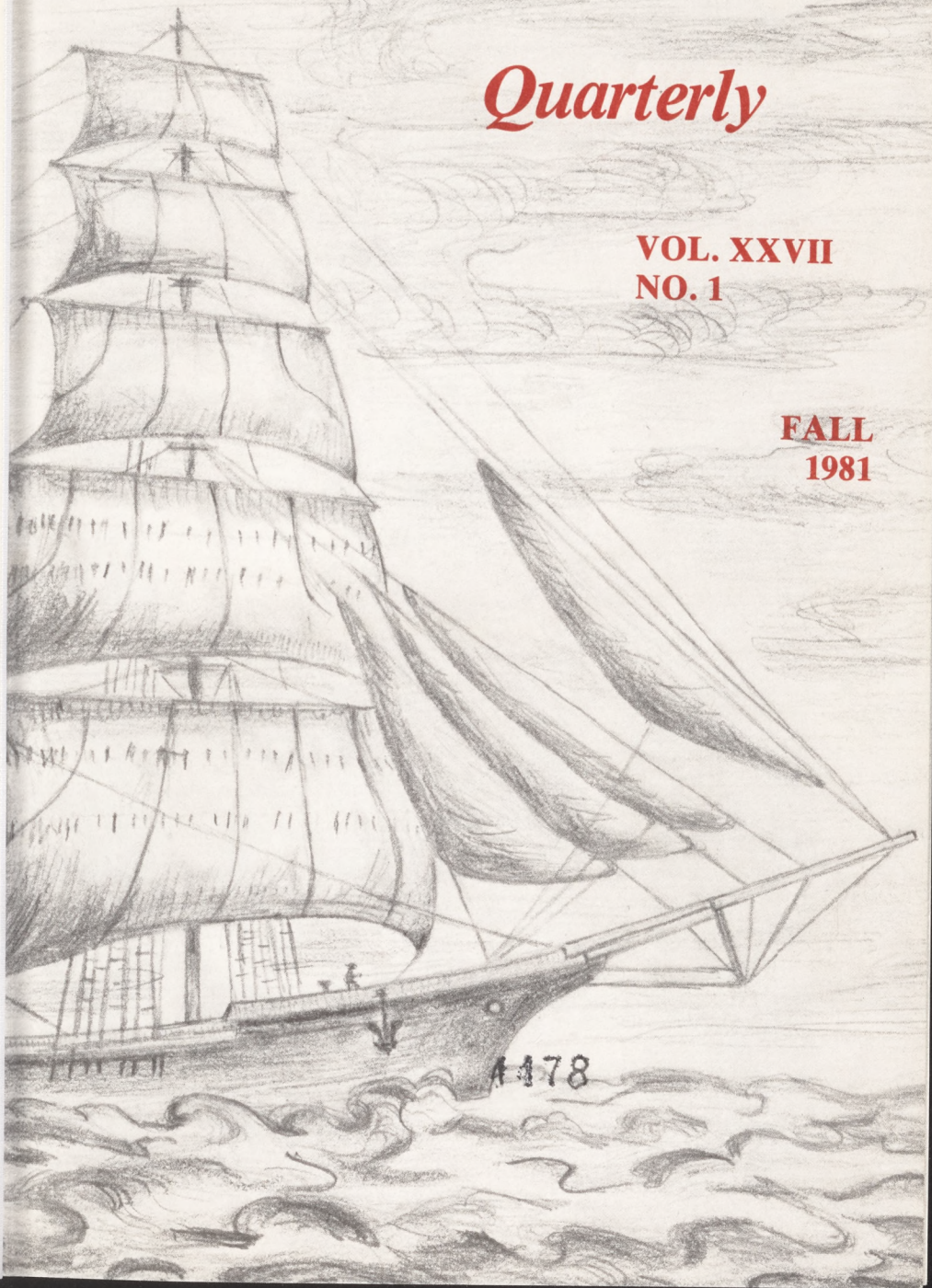

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The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Grant W. Heil, Editor

Vol. XXVII, No. 1 Fall 1981

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By Travis Hudson

THE YANKEE CLIPPER, RICHARD ROBINSON
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Notice

Travis Hudson has detailed an Indian story noted in his *Breath of the sun.*

Mrs. Strong was helped in her research by Charles E. West, her sister Linda Robinson Goldworthy and her aunt Shirley Robinson Bliss. The latter supplied most of the pictures. Her "facts came from the ships' logs, numerous letters written to and by the captain, newspaper clippings from the time and later newpaper clippings which recounted some of her sailing records . . . [She] also used a couple of the maritime books which her ancestors had bought . . ."

Errata

There are two corrections to make in the Summer 1981 issue: The callout for footnote 11 is to be added at the end of the 2nd paragraph on page 9 after the word "Bonaventure;" the identification under the photos on page 21 are to be reversed—Thomas Binns is on the left and A. J. Comstock is on the right.

CRISTOVAL MANEJO
A NEARLY FORGOTTEN MAN

By Travis Hudson

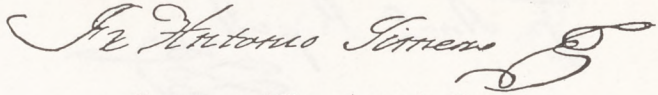
A few years ago I began work on a unique book. It was to be a story of what life was like for a Chumash Indian living in a California mission, to be told in the man's words. Never before had such a book been written; and I had a particular advantage in doing it for I had access to the thousands of fieldnotes written in Chumash, Spanish and English by anthropologist John P. Harrington[1] between 1912 and 1915.

Harrington was an exceptionally gifted man; and realizing that the aged Indian people he was interviewing had experienced mission life, he asked questions, recording in their words what it was like among other topics. Working a sixteen hour day, seven days a week, he labored to write it all down in his scrawling handwriting on now faded yellow scrap paper; all of which was to be sent upon his death in 1961 to the Smithsonian Institution in some sixty cardboard boxes.

If Harrington was unusual as well as gifted, no less can be said of his Indian informants, especially one named Fernando Librado (Kitsepawit). Harrington met Fernando in 1912, and he immediately recognized that this 108-year-old man was a prime source of information. For the next three years he worked with Fernando until the Indian's death in 1915 at 111 years of age. Yet another important informant was an aged Chumash woman named Luisa Ygnacio (Nut'u); she was born about 1830 and died in 1922.

I enter this story in 1973 when I arrived at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and began research on the local Indian past. The Harrington notes became a necessity; and I quickly ordered xeroxed copies and began translation,

1. John Peabody Harrington (1884-1961). For an intimate view, see *Encounter with an angry god,* the biography by his wife.



Signature of Fray Antonio Jimeno

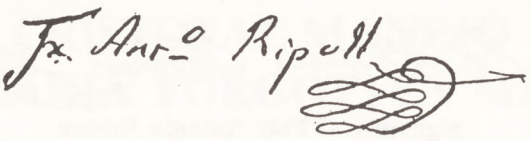
transcription and organization. Working by specific topics, various books on Chumash religion, astronomy, technology, etc. were produced first; I then turned my attention in 1978 to working on the mission period described by Fernando, and I chose as my title *Breath of the sun*[2] which is the Chumash way of saying dawn or daybreak. I selected this for my book because I felt it would be casting a new light upon the usual biased story told so many times in the words of others than Indians about the mission system. I was not too deep into the research when I discovered Cristoval (Manejo). Fernando talked about him once in a story. Luisa Ygnacio, I was to discover, also knew and spoke of him; and both informants presented a description of what seemed to me to have been a very special person, forgotten because of his Indianness and because of the emphasis in early California to record things about the important people, people of birth.

Fortunately I was wrong to some extent, for Cristoval (Manejo) was the type of man who also made an impression on one of these important people of his day. This I discovered while doing a series of endnotes for my books, which required reading some of the writings of the time. The reference in particular was found in two short accounts told by *Senora* Angustias Jimeno Ord, wife of Manuel Jimeno and daughter of Don Jose de la Guerra,[3] about life in early California. Both stories centered around her husband's brother, Fray Antonio Jimeno, who was stationed at Misison Santa Barbara.

Putting it together, a picture of a flamboyant personality emerges and its uniqueness cuts sharply across time and

2. *Breath of the sun: life in early California as told by a Chumash Indian, Fernando Librado, to John P. Harrington.* Malki Museum Press, 1979; co-published with the Ventura County Historial Society.

3. Don Jose de la Guerra y Noriega was the captain at Santa Barbara.



Signature of Fray Antonio Ripoll

ethnic dimensions. While Cristoval (Manejo) is dead, his spirit lives on in the form of his deeds and ideas, his values and views and the other things which make us all special in being human; and in his case even more so.

* * *

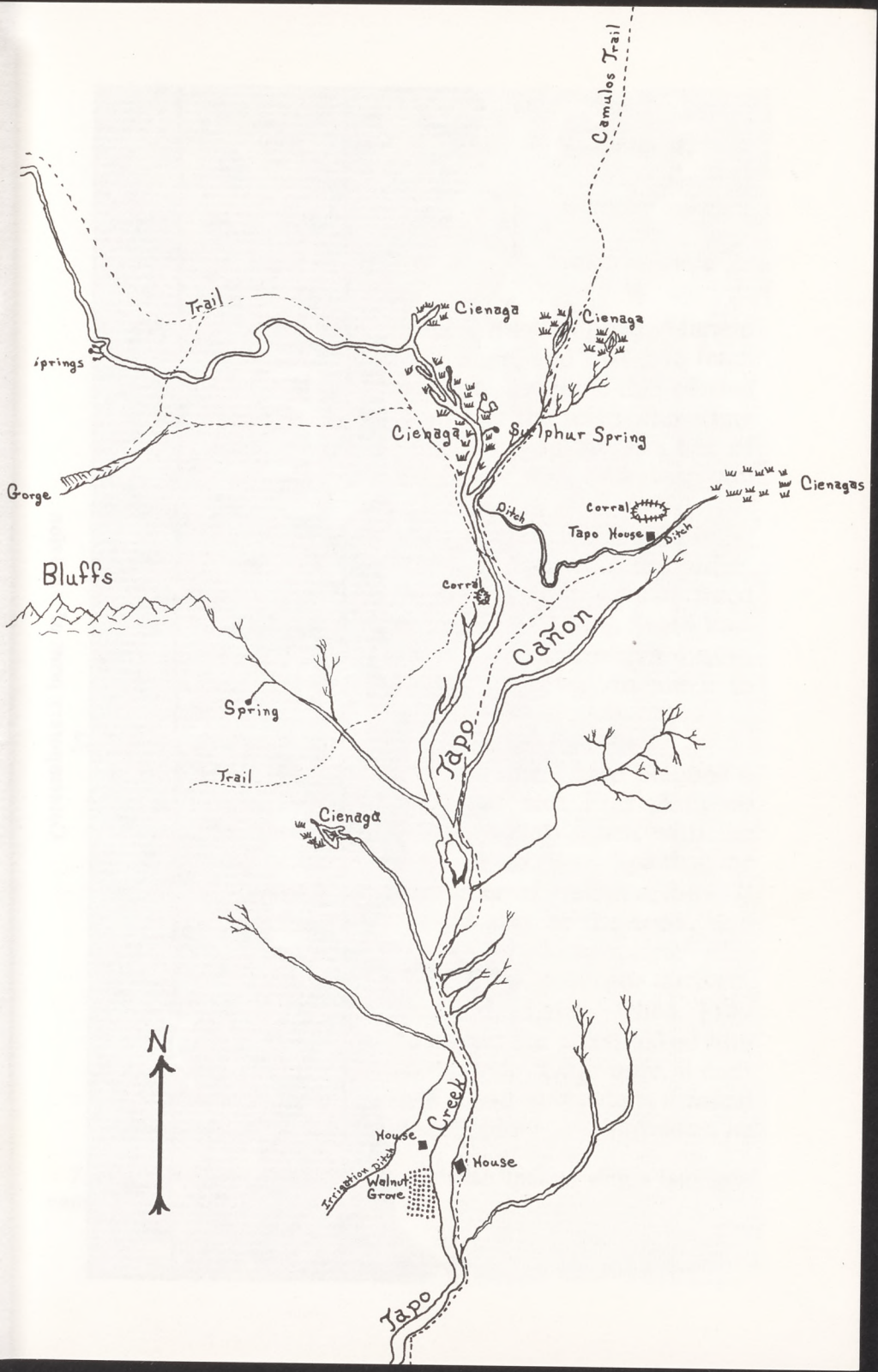
Fernando Librado told this story of the man:

> Once there was a Santa Barbara Indian named Manejo who was sent by the priest[4] of Mission Santa Barbara to fetch a keg of wine. With his mule, Manejo arrived at Tapo[5] and the next day filled the keg. Upon their return they slept at Ventura and the next day journeyed on towards Santa Barbara. When they reached the creek at Canada de Los Sauces, the mule laid down on the ground to rest, only to stir up a nest of wasps which came out and began to sting him. The animal ran away and broke the wine keg.
>
> When Manejo arrived in Santa Barbara, he went to the priest to tell him what had happened. The priest told him to go home and come back tomorrow morning. Manejo returned and told the priest exactly how it happened. The priest then turned to Victorio[6] and said, "Come along and give this man twenty-five lashes on his back."

4. In all probability the friar involved in this story was Fray Antonio Ripoll of Mission Santa Barbara. Cristoval (Manejo) was his servant at the time of the 1824 Chumash uprising, and was also the priest's translator since he spoke excellent Castilian. *T.H.*

5. The Tapo was one of the two headquarters at Rancho Simi. It lies in the northeastern part; and protected by a wall of mountains, a vineyard was planted in its rich soil. The Tapo was one of the two places in Ventura County known for wine.

6. Victorio was the *alcalde* (Sp., judge) elected by the Indians to police their community.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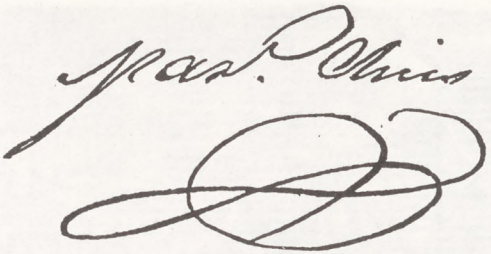
Contemporary print of a mission



Signature of Governor Mariano Chico

On hearing the order to have him whipped, Manejo spoke to the priest, "Pali, the mule, and I went to fetch the wine for your pleasure. It was the mule that carried the keg on his back, but I am not the wasp who stung him on the ass. Which would suit you more: a keg of wine you feel on your back; or the sting of a wasp you feel on your ass?"

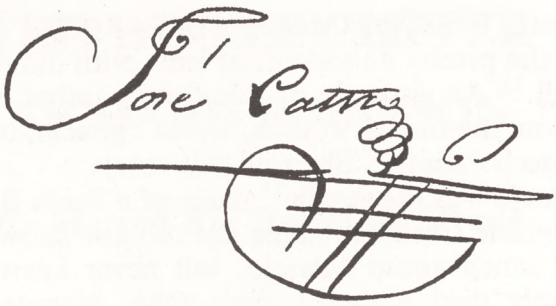
"Well," the priest laughed at this and went inside, leaving Manejo with the other Indians and the judge, Victorio. Manejo then found out that he had freed himself from the whipping; and so he said in Santa Barbara Chumash, *"Kuti kasa'm 'ip'ekam"* which meant, "That's the way to do it: that's the way to put it to them."

Senora Angustias Jimeno Ord told these stories:

Once, she said, Governor Mariano Chico planned a visit to Santa Barbara in 1836; and Fray Antonio Jimeno decided to invite Cristoval to lunch with the dignitary. Since Cristoval spoke excellent Spanish, he could discuss with Chico the state of Indian affairs. It happened that Cristoval would also be the cook, and Fray Jimeno notified the sixty-year-old neophyte[7] who lived there to prepare. When the governor arrived, however, Cristoval disappeared. Later, when Fray Jimeno and Cristoval were alone, the priest asked him why he had left. The Indian replied, "Oh, *Padre,* it does not agree with me to be with a bad man. He is a rascal with eyeglasses. Can't you see, son? I saw him when he

7. Neophytes were the converts, Christian Indians with a baptismal name.

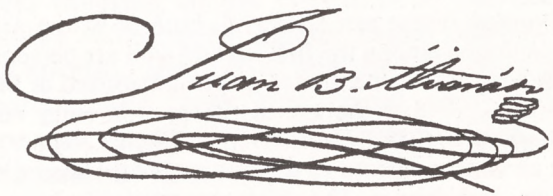
Alvarado vainly harangues the Indians



Signature of General Jose Castro

arrived, and I saw his eyes looking out from under his glasses and was afraid." The priest tried to convince Cristoval that the new governor was a good man; but Cristoval would not hear of it, replying, "Wait a bit and you shall see how he acts and soon you can tell me whether he is good or bad; see who wins, you or me." [Cristoval won!][8]

The second Ord story relates a visit to Fray Jimeno by Jose Castro[9] and Juan Alvarado,[10] again two very important *Californios;* and when they arrived Cristoval came out with the Spanish greeting, *"Viva California libre;* put your hand where you please." Castro and Alvarado were shocked, and asked the Indian what he meant. Cristoval replied he said it "because you rob everyone!" Everyone laughed and said no more to him.



Signature of Governor Juan Alvarado

8. Chico was expelled from California after only three months in office.
9. General Jose Castro of Monterey.
10. Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado of San Pablo.

Apparently Cristoval (Manejo) had a special understanding with the priests he served, at least with Jimeno, if not with Ripoll.[11] An example of this comes across in the next account from the Indian woman, Luisa Ygnacio, in speaking about tobacco eating.[12] She told this story:

> Manejo was the gentile[13] name of a Santa Barbara Indian whose Christian name she did not know. She had heard much about Manejo, but never knew him. He probably died before Luisa's time. Manejo was stationed at the Refugio[14] *Rancho,* a ranch which the Santa Barbara Mission priests had there.
>
> Once Manejo ate too much tobacco at his Indian adobe quarters at Mission Santa Barbara, and he got drunk from it. The Spanish page at the mission found him, and the page went and told the priest (Luisa thinks it was Fray Antonio Jimeno); and the priest came to see what was wrong with Manejo. Manejo told the priest that he had been eating tobacco, and that "It makes you feel fine. You do not thing of women or anything, just sleep," he replied. "Well," the priest said, "All right. It is well." And the priest then sat down and chatted with him about various subjects.

* * *

In conclusion, Cristoval (Manejo) is a sort of Indian Mark Twain: to be respected for his Indianness; enjoyed with his humor; and appreciated in his native ability.

11. I summoned Jayme and Cristoval, both of whom are considered the best Hispanicized among the Indians and who are persons of great intelligence. [A Cristoval is mentioned as being baptized at Mission Santa Barbara March 6, 1818 at the age of fifteen. His entry number in the Baptismal Register is 4039.] *Fray Antonio Ripoll's Report.*

12. It was an Indian custom to mix the native tobacco with powdered lime and water, and chew it. The effect was much like being drunk. The friars objected to its use, and directed the alcades to look for the users so that they could be brought before the priest and whipped. *T.H.*

13. Gentile meant pagan as distinct from Christian.

14. Refugio was a *rancho* of the mission for grazing.

THE YANKEE CLIPPER
RICHARD ROBINSON

By Marsha Kee Robinson Strong

Scarcely more than one hundred years ago, we rose from a struggling young country to be the greatest maritime power in the world. The men who put America on the marine map were our forefathers, the men of the clipper ship era. Like all of these new Americans, they came from other parts of the globe. The master ship builders, captains and crewmen were from Holland, Wales, Canada, Scandinavia, Scotland, Ireland, England and France. They were an adventuresome breed with new ideas, new visions and a single propelling dream of building sailing ships capable of as yet unheard speeds.

In the early 1800's a design was developed that would change the course of world history. The ship was long and narrow with three masts and many sails; and its bow came to a point. It was capable of catching the power of the wind in its billowing sails and cutting through the water with minimal resistance. And such ships had the grace and seaworthiness inherent in the creatures of the deep. These sailing wonders were called clipper ships. Named for their phenomenal speeds,[1] they could clip the time off any existing sailing records. And with this speed and agility came economic power, making America the foremost maritime power in existence at that time.

1. This popular explanation is probably apocryphal. Captain Arthur H. Clark writes that the origin of the word "clipper" is not clear: it might be derived from the verb "clip", a term of many meanings as exemplified in the New England slang expressions "a fast clip"; when vessels of a new model, intentend to clip over the waves rather than plow through them were built, they were called clippers.

Mrs. Mary Wentworth Robinson

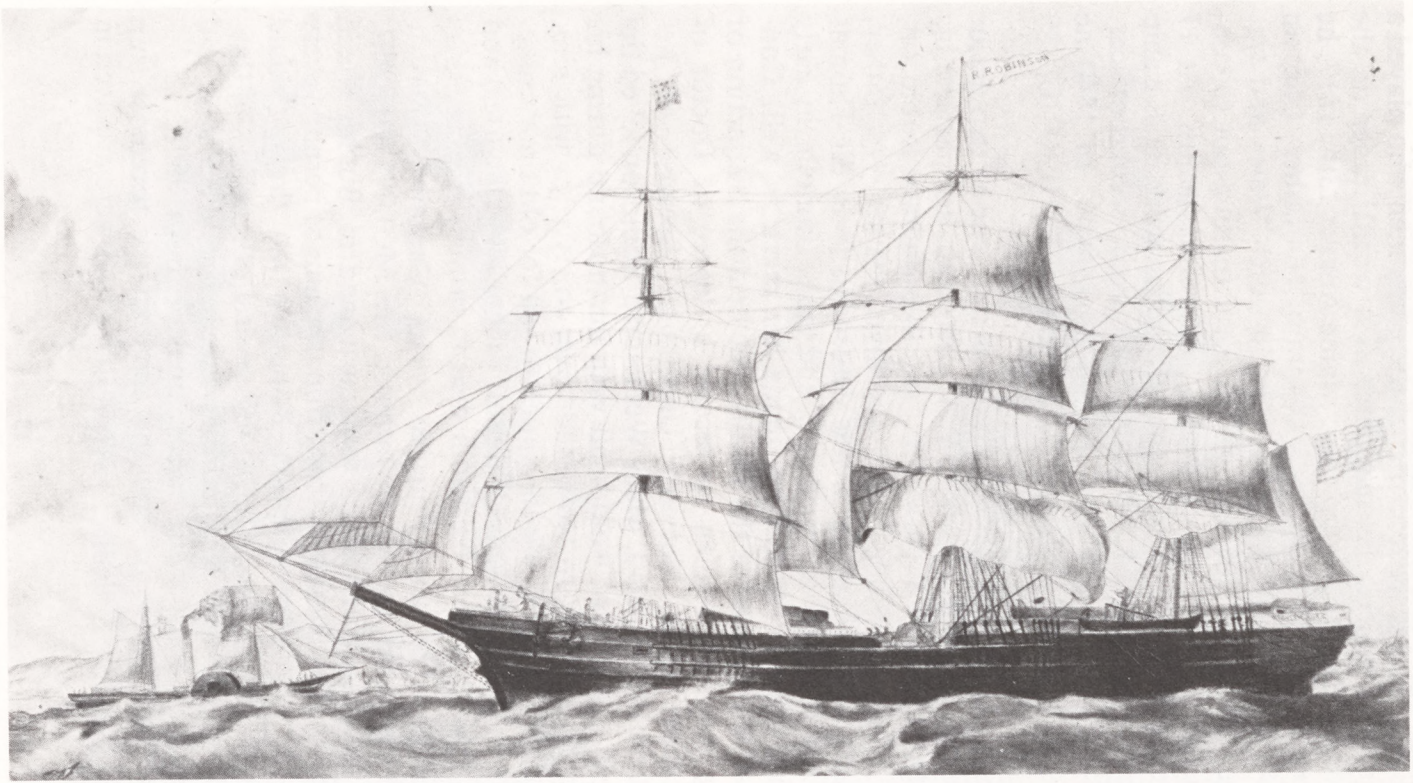
Captain Richard Robinson, Jr.

Richard Robinson was one of the many men who played a key role in America's emergence as a world leader on the high seas. Born in Thomaston, Maine August 13th, 1817, he was himself the son of a ship captain. His father, Captain Richard Robinson, Sr., was born in north Wales and was one of the men who came to this great melting pot to contribute his expertise to America's maritime genius. At 17 years of age, Richard Robinson, Jr., began working as a ship crewman. At age 19 he graduated to become second officer. And six months later he became chief mate. In 1840 he became captain of his first ship, the brig CATHERINE, 239 tons worth of sailing vessel.

But becoming a captain at last was only one of two major events in the year 1840. On August 26th he married his sweetheart, Mary Wentworth. She, like Richard Robinson, came from a shipping family and loved the sea. Her father, Captain John Wentworth, was descended from Sir Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford and quite famous in early English history. And Mary made her mark as well. Considered the scholar of the family, she held the distinction of being the first woman to receive a degree of Doctor of Education from Harvard University. Because of her maritime background, Mary Wentworth Robinson loved the sea and quite often would sail with her husband during his career. She is said to have made over thirty trips with him; and after his death, she continued to sail for old time's sake. She bore him three sons (William, Richard and Charles) and two daughters, both of whom died in infancy.

During the next fourteen years Captain Robinson mastered ships owned by others: the MOUNTAINEER, PYRAMID and HARDET to name a handful. But his dream was to one day master his own ship, the aim of perhaps every captain alive. For Captain Robinson the dream would become a reality. In 1854 he and several others pooled their resources to build a ship. She should be large, fast and capable of enduring the bad weather of the Atlantic.

And she was to be built by some of the foremost ship builders in New England, a credit to all who were involved in



A July 24, 1882 letter to Robinson from San Francisco reads "Upon opening find it to be the picture of the R. ROBINSON, formerly hanging in your mother's parlor."

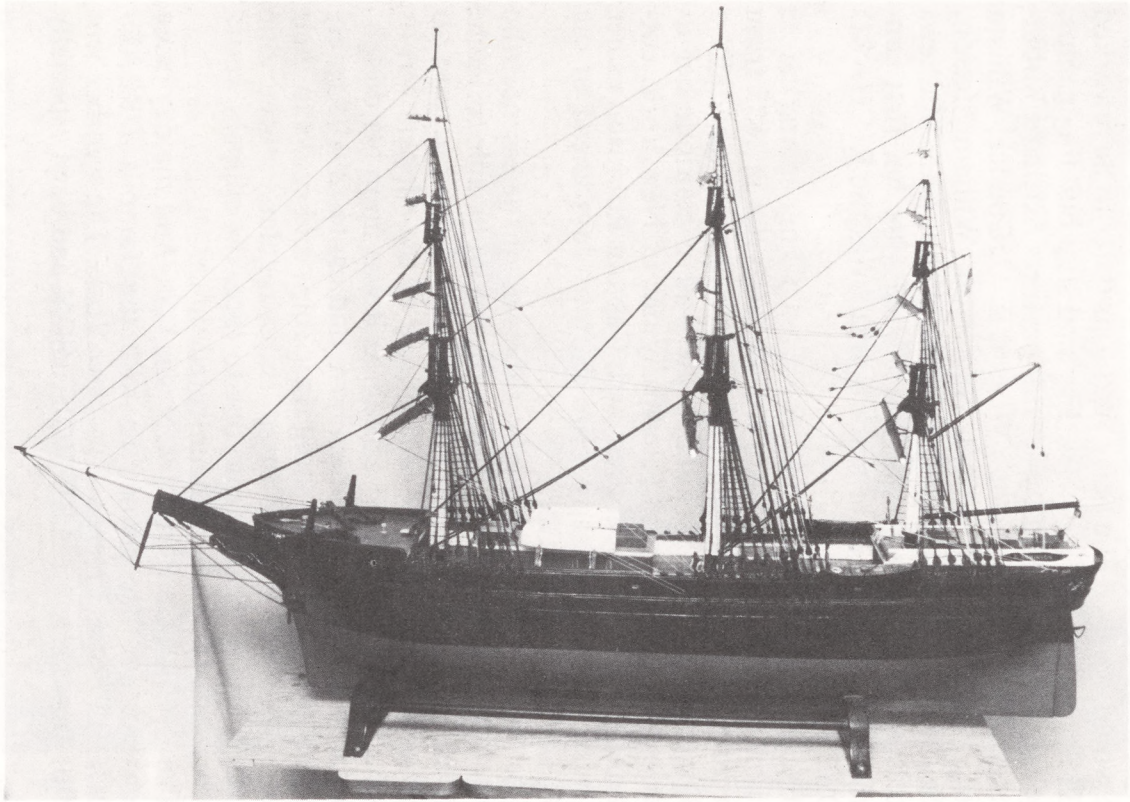
her birth. W. Stetson and Company, master ship builders, put her body together; and Dunn & Elliot, sail makers, made her full-rigged sails. When she was completed she was 200 feet in length, 40 feet in breadth and 21½ feet in depth. And she would weigh in at a hefty 1458 tons (later to be reworked at 1652 tons)[2] a work of New England ship building genius. Though she was owned by several partners (Richard Robinson, Ambrose Snow, Joseph Wilson, R. C. Counce, William Flint, Richard Elliot, Joseph Nickerson, William Stetson, S. S. Gerry, Alpheus Sherman, Sarah Webb, Isacc Mathews and Richard Woodhull) she was named after her first captain. She would make her mark in history as the RICHARD ROBINSON.

The RICHARD ROBINSON started off her sailing career by immediately making a record-breaking run in 1855 from Thomaston, Maine to Mobile, Alabama in only eight days, a sailing record that still stands. She was to continue her illustrious career shipping principally out of New York, cotton and tea her main cargoes, with Captain Robinson as her master. There were many more glorious days ahead of the RICHARD ROBINSON.

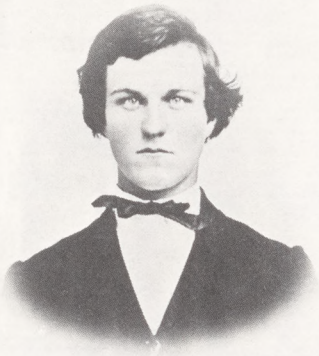
For the clipper ship captains time was of the essence: the faster she sailed the more money she would be able to fetch. Because of this, virtually every passage from one port to another was a race. The speed of any of the clippers was as much dependent upon her captain as it was upon her design. The fastest ships were said to have had captains who rarely slept in order to keep pushing their ships and crews to their limits. The masters of these ships regularly raced one another; and if there was no one to race, the clippers would race against the fastest documented times.

The RICHARD ROBINSON was fast. And the day came when she got her chance to race the famous DREADNOUGHT from Liverpool to New York. The weather was awful. But the RICHARD ROBINSON had been especially

2. "Rather, the method by which the tonnage was figured was changed. The revision which was instituted was a more accurate system." *C.E.W.*



Model of the Richard Robinson by William Robinson, restored by Charles West



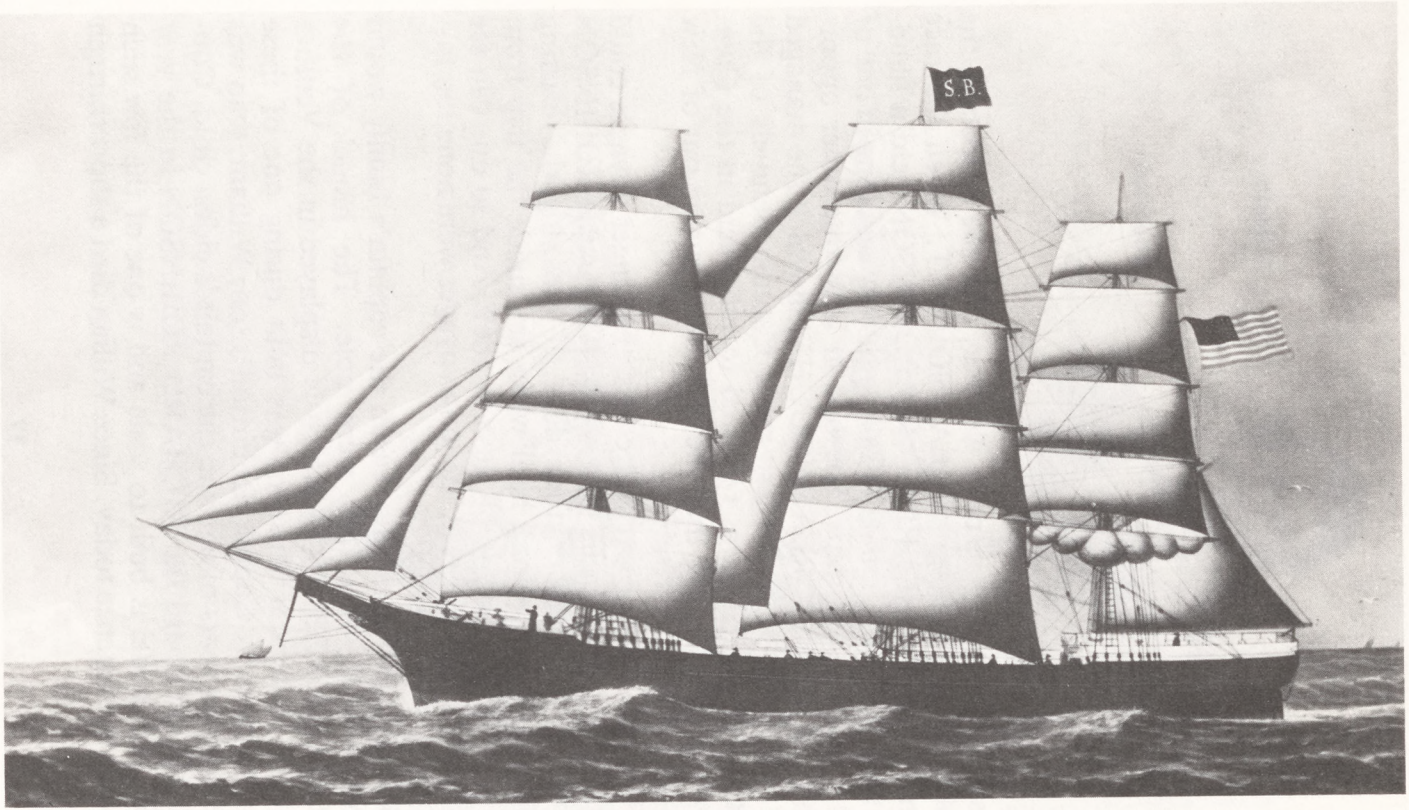
William

Robinson

designed for speed in poor weather, and she welcomed the challenge of the great DREADNOUGHT. When the race came to a close, the RICHARD ROBINSON held a handsome 18-hour lead, making sailing history by doing in one of America's fastest ships. She had at least one other opportunity to race the DREADNOUGHT, in which she managed to pull a tie. Due to these races Captain Samuels of the DREADNOUGHT was reported to have said in the *Commercial news* in 1895 that she was the only ship out of New York that he was afraid of.

Though these clippers were fast, the longer voyages could still take many months at sea. The RICHARD ROBINSON came within three or four days of breaking the existing record of a fairly long haul when she made the trip from London to Bombay in 88 days in 1869. And so one can see that even at their fastest, the long voyages were none too fast by today's standards.

It is primarily for this reason the captain's family would come along when they were able. The model of the RICHARD ROBINSON which is displayed in the Ventura County Historical Musuem was built during one of these long voyages by Captain Robinson's son, William, who was twenty-four years of age and the captain's eldest child. Constructed on board the RICHARD ROBINSON in the year 1866, the model is built to scale and is one of the few such models in existence today. Since Willian died a short thirteen



RICHARD ROBINSON at Antwerp in 1876. *Peabody Museum of Salem.*

years later leaving no issue, the captain especially treasured the beautiful model his son had built for him of his ship.

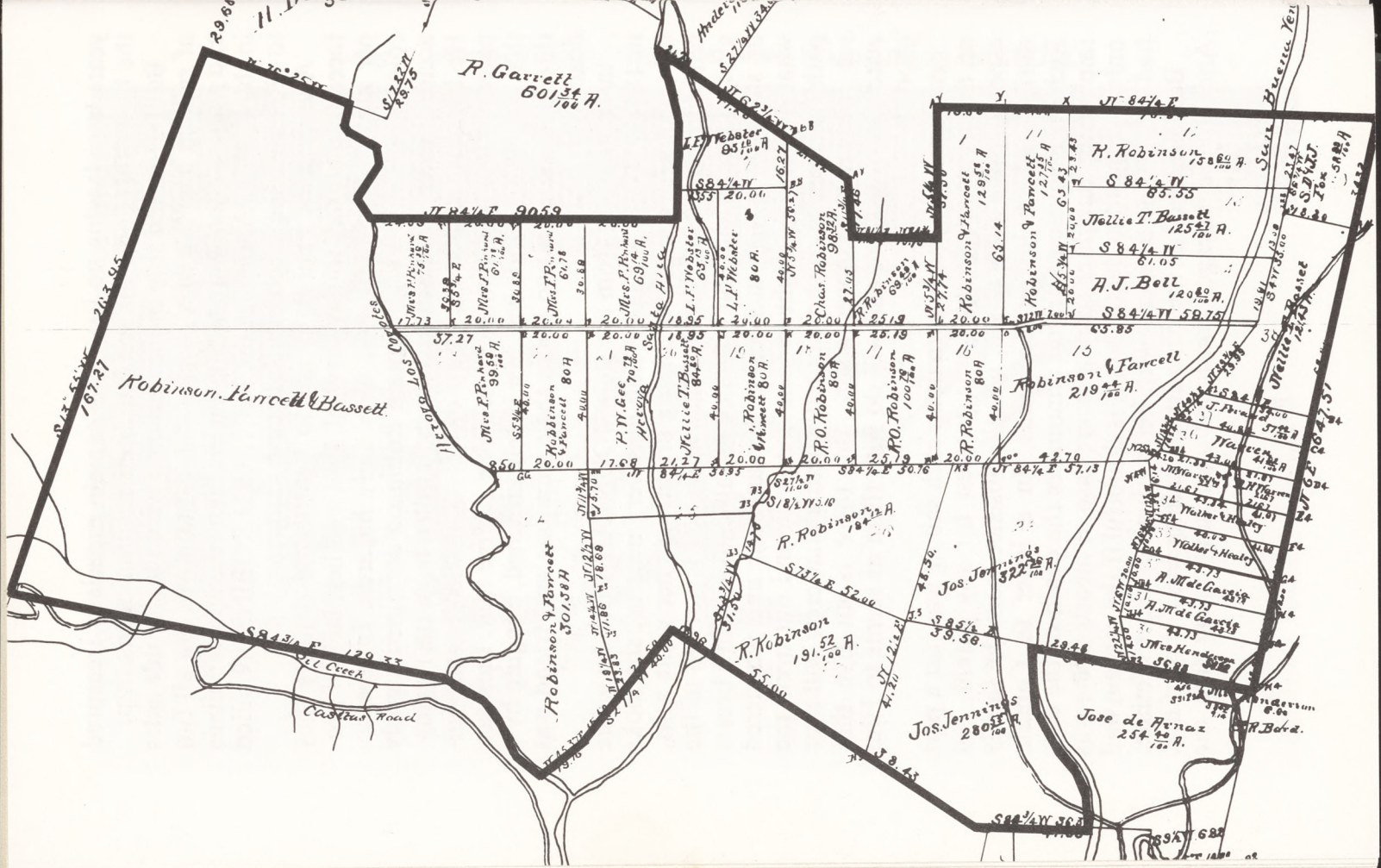
But racing and ship model building were pleasurable sides of sailing. The life of a clipper ship captain was not all fun and games. There were pirates on the high seas and cannibals in the Pacific. And since the RICHARD ROBINSON sailed to all areas, she faced each of these dangers.

And this, of course, is not to belittle the dangers they faced in their day-to-day survival. Bad weather, lack of proper medical facilities, etc., were daily hazards. In one account in his ship's logs Captain Robinson described a grisly accident whereby one of his crew had fallen from the rigging. He landed on deck on sharp objects and was literally impaled. When his shipmates were able to free him, they saw that one of his hands was just barely attached, hanging by a thread of skin. In two hours their shipmate and friend was dead.

In another log from the ship MOUNTAINEER, he wrote in 1851: "There is a large ship now very near us, she looks beautiful with the moon shining brightly on her white sails, reminding me of the lines, 'The snowy sail is hoisted to the gladly gushing gale that bosomed its fair canvas with a breast of silver.' I have watched her for an hour and wondered what her destiny might be; she is now bound out upon the pathless deep, and who can tell whether that crew will ever see their native shores again. But there is an Eye that watcheth over them and will do with them as seems to Him good."

And facing the unknown upon each sailing was just a part of the hardship. Perhaps the greatest for any parent, but especially one away at sea, was the absence from the family during sad or joyous occasions. In a letter to Captain Richard Robinson a friend announces the death of the captain's baby daughter from a severe case of measles. She was only a year old at death; and it is doubtful if the captain had had much time to spend with her during her short lifetime.

But in spite of all these hardships, sailing was a way of life. And so the voyages continued marching along like the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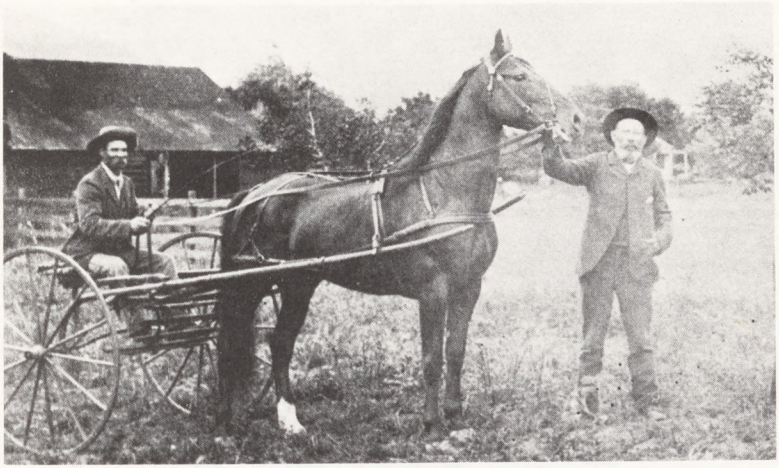


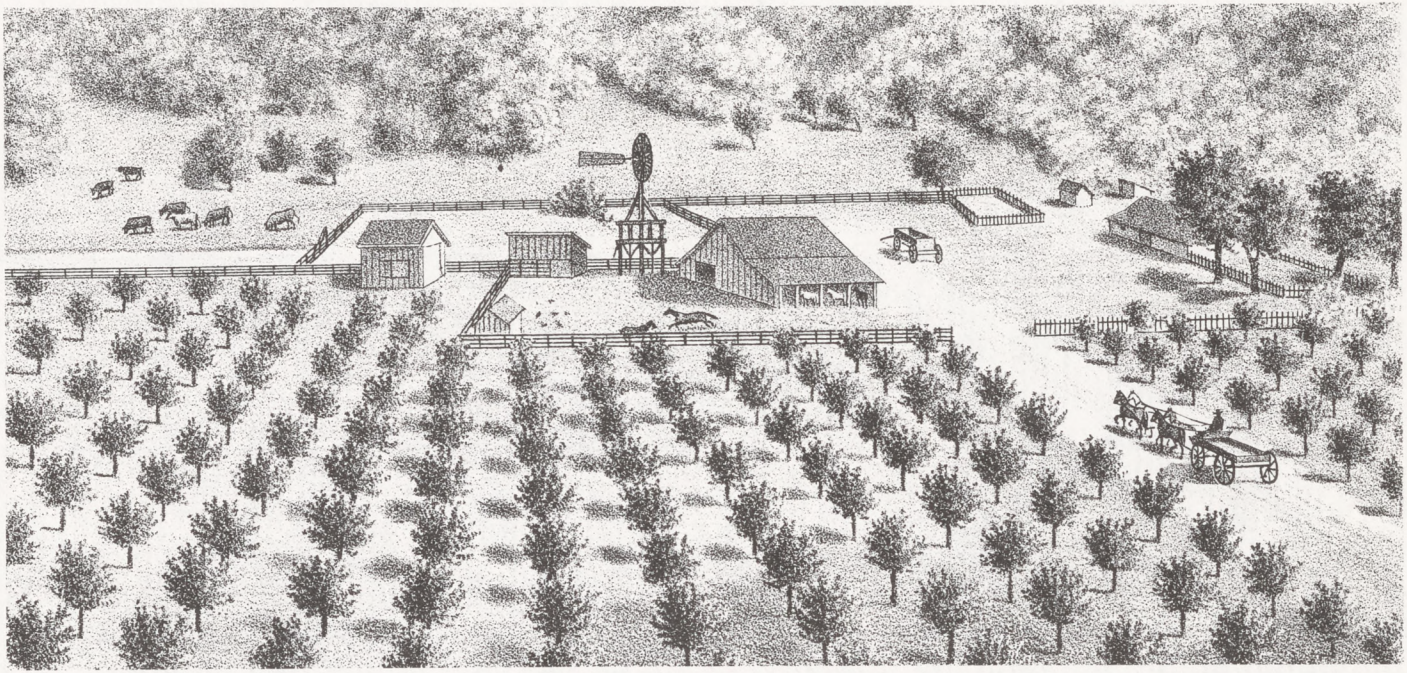
Captain Robinson with a racehorse

soldiers of time, each one bringing the clipper ship era closer to its demise. In the late 1860's and early 1870's the clipper ships that had put America on the map began to lose footing in their own trade. The steam ship had come on the scene. No longer dependent upon the whims of the weather, ships could now move under their own power.

Little by little the clippers lost their cargoes to steam ships. The waits in the harbors became longer and longer, sometimes waiting for months to pick up a cargo. And when they did get one, they were reduced from their once regal standing to hauling menial loads for short distances. Times were getting rough for these majestic vessels, and dangerously short.

But for Captain Robinson it was basically over anyway. After more than thirty-five years at sea, he was ready to quit. He had made good money as part owner and captain of a profitable and fast ship, and so in 1872 he chose to retire and came to Santa Barbara.

In 1873 he removed to Ventura County, purchasing part of the Santa Ana Rancho in conjunction with his friends, Eugene Fawcett, Sr., and Mr. Dean. Here he, an incurable racer at heart, tried his hand at raising race horses. Though he did raise beautiful animals, none were ever raced. He also



RESIDENCE, FARM BUILDINGS & PART OF ORCHARD OF **RICHARD ROBINSON,**
UPPER OJAI VALLEY, VENTURA CO. CAL.

Ranch house in the Upper Ojai

bought over 440 acres in the Upper Ojai Valley where he built a home.

He was still an owner of the RICHARD ROBINSON; and it brought him a healthy retirement income under the mastering of William Stetson, and later Levi Smith. Though work for the RICHARD ROBINSON was falling off, it continued to sail for profit under the ownership of the captain until 1882. But finally, the changing times had their way and the RICHARD ROBINSON was sold.[3] These were dark days

3. The RICHARD ROBINSON was sold to F. de Martini, an Austrian; and she was sailed to the Austro-Hungarian port of Trieste where the log ends. The ship fetched a price of $16,000, which was a credit to her condition after thirty years. *M.K.R.S.*

Home on Oak Street, Ventura

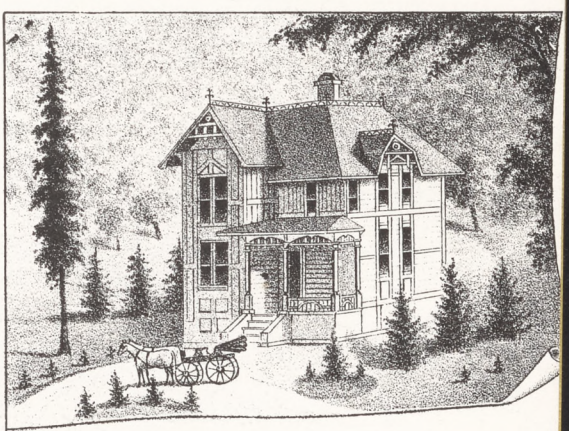
for the men of the Yankee clippers. A. M. Simpson, builder of the full-rigged WESTERN SHORE, one of the first clippers built on the West Coast, wrote: "But after all, I am one of the fools talking of resurrecting sail tonnage when the oil gives out or costs the vessels more than a dollar a barrel."

In 1889 Captain Robinson moved one more time. This was to a house at the end of Oak Street in Ventura overlooking his beloved sea. Today the Holiday Inn towers where the captain's house once stood. Though his Ventura home was destroyed, his house in the upper Ojai still stands over 100 years later, and is still owned and occupied by the captain's descendants.

He spent his last years watching the interminable rhythm of the waves and the newer ships sail by, observing an evolution that was both kind and cruel to a man who had mastered the wind and the waves. On February 6, 1896 Captain Robinson died of cancer. He was buried in the Montecito Cemetery with the epitaph, "An honest man, the noblest work of God."[4]

With the death of the clippers and the men like Captain Richard Robinson came the end of a regal era in the history of our great country. But theirs was a time, a force, a dream not to be forgotten. For such vision and such spirit is the heritage of America: it is the blood that flows through our veins. It is the legacy of the mighty Yankee Clipper.

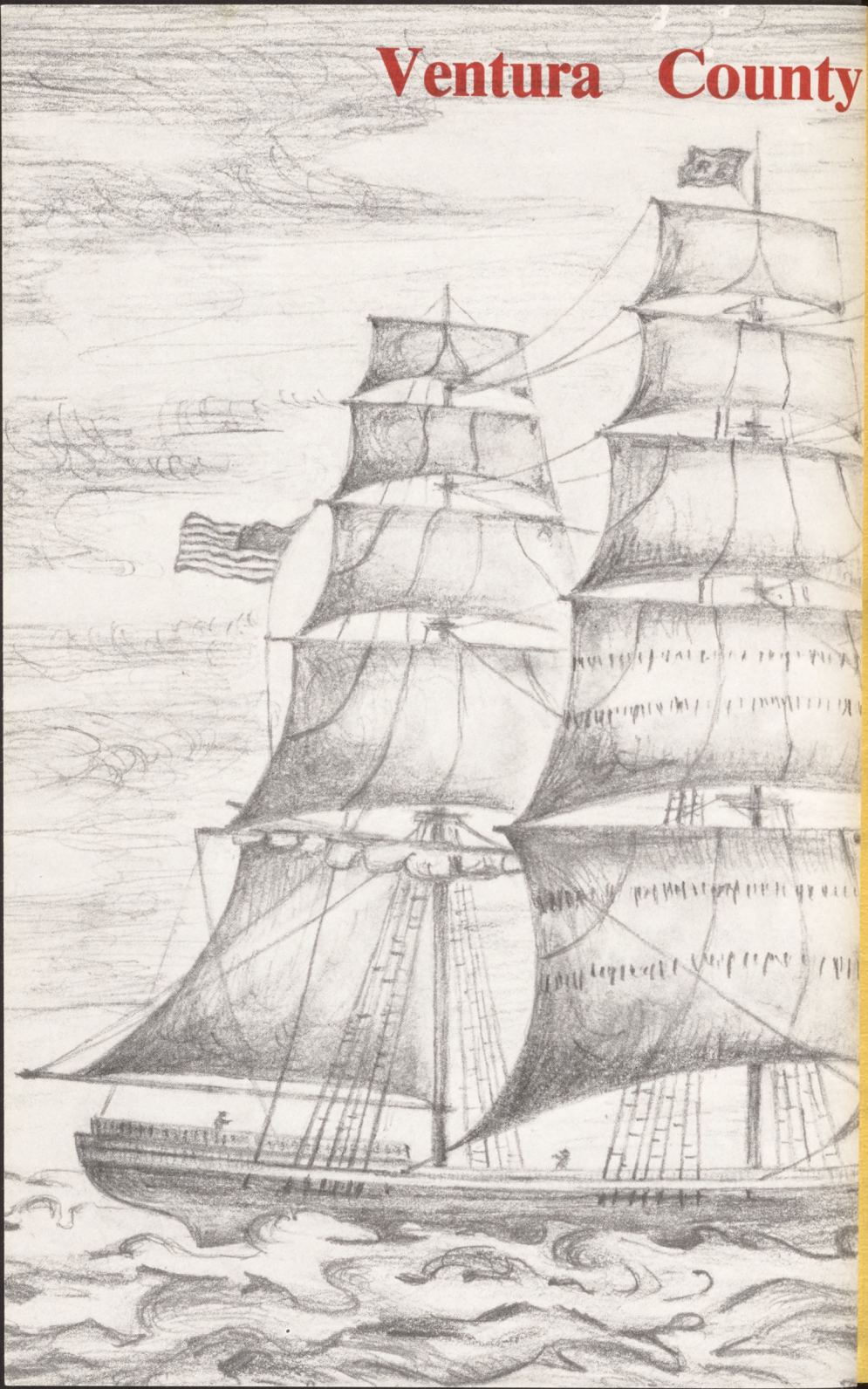
Addenda



—In the early eighties Mrs. Susan Robinson Coffin came to California to join the family of her brother, Capt. Richard Robinson of the upper Ojai valley, in Ventura county. A few years after coming west she married George W. Coffin, who at that time was mayor of Santa Barbara. *Santa Barbara News-Press*

4. *Alexander Pope* and *Robert Burns.*

Ventura County



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Governor Felipe de Neve

Ventura County Historical Society *Quarterly*

Vol. XXVII
No. 2

Winter
1982

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The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Grant W. Heil, Editor

Vol. XXVII, No. 2 Winter 1982

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By Lynn Bowman

FIRST MASS OFFERED IN MISSION CHURCH
BY A FUTURE MARTYR
By Msgr. Francis J. Weber

Notice

Mrs. Bowman is the author of *Los Angeles, epic of a city;* she also selected the illustrations for her article. Msgr. Weber is head of the Archival Center at San Fernando Mission.

Danilo Matteini sketched the scene and the back cover, and Paul Clodi drew the map.

Funding in part for printing this issue provided by the Achille Levy Foundation.

Caravels were square rigged on the foremast, with lateen rigging on the other three. The name was Greek, but the design had been modified from the Arab *dhow* **by the Portuguese. Reproduced from** *The Western Explorer,* **II** *2* **(Cabrillo Historical Association, Sept. 1968).**

THE FOUNDING OF VENTURA

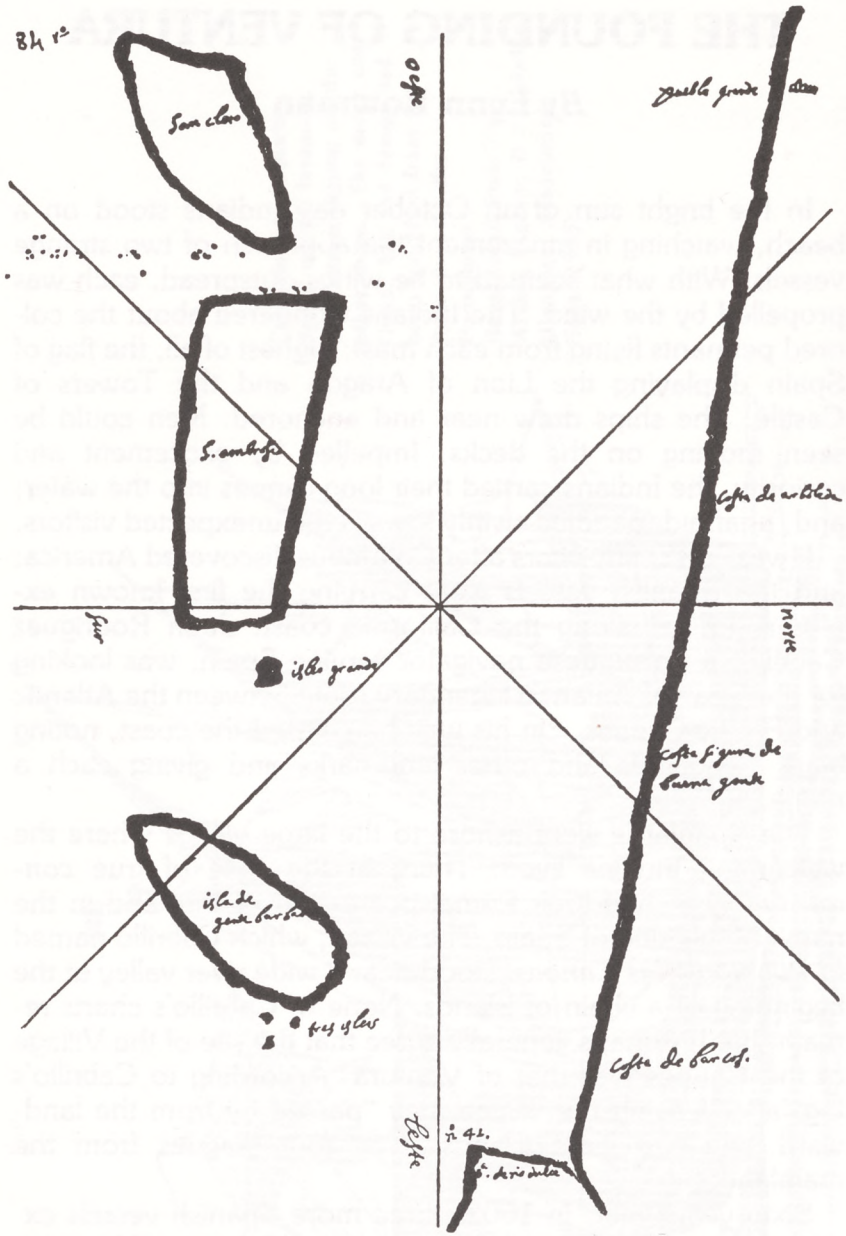
By Lynn Bowman

In the bright sun of an October day Indians stood on a beach, watching in amazement the approach of two strange vessels. With what seemed to be wings outspread, each was propelled by the wind. The Indians wondered about the colored pennants flying from each mast: highest of all, the flag of Spain displaying the Lion of Aragon and the Towers of Castile. The ships drew near and anchored. Men could be seen moving on the decks. Impelled by excitement and curiosity, the Indians carried their long canoes into the water; and, unafraid, paddled swiftly toward the unexpected visitors.

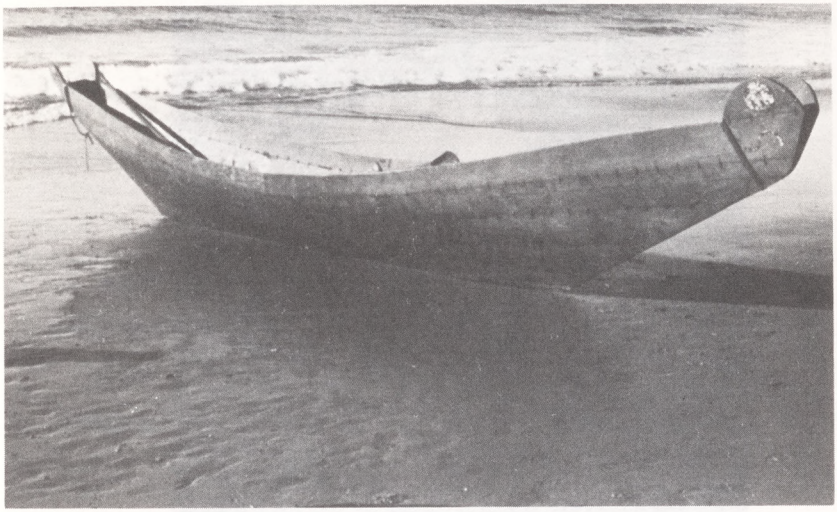
It was 1542, fifty years after Columbus discovered America; and the Spanish vessels were carrying the first known explorers to sail along the California coast. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese navigator serving Spain, was looking for the Strait of Anian, a legendary route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. On his way he charted the coast, noting bays, headlands and other landmarks and giving each a name.

The Spaniards went ashore to the large village where the welcoming Indians lived. Then, in the style of true *conquistadores,* they took formal possession of the land in the name of the king of Spain. The village, which Cabrillo named *El Pueblo de las Canoas,* stood near a wide river valley at the beginning of a chain of islands. None of Cabrillo's charts remain, but historians generally agree that the site of the Village of the Canoes was that of Ventura. According to Cabrillo's log, after leaving the village they "passed by from the landward side two large islands . . . four leagues from the mainland."[1]

Sixty years later, in 1602, three more Spanish vessels explored the coast under the command of Sebastian Vizcaino. An officer was detailed to make maps, assisted by a friar, one of three on board.



Vizcaino's chart of the Santa Barbara Channel. Reproduced from W. Michael Matthes, *Vizcaino and Spanish expansion in the Pacific Ocean, 1580-1630,* published by the California Historical Society.

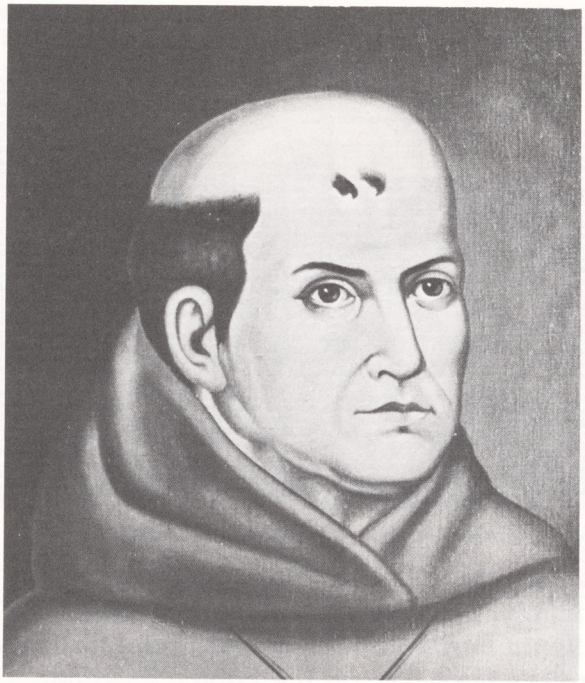


Chumash canoe, restored and sailed

When Vizcaino came to the string of islands mentioned by Cabrillo, he named the water between them and the mainland *El Canal de Santa Barbara,* because the explorers arrived just before that saint's feast day on the church calendar. From a village at the entrance to the channel, Indians paddled out in long canoes, chanting as they came.[2] They urged the Spaniards to stay and visit them, but Vizcaino remained at anchor only briefly. Favorable winds had been blowing the ships along speedily; and he decided to hold to that advantage.

Apparently Vizcaino had no copy of Cabrillo's charts because he gave his own entirely different names to the various landmarks. But there was an exception. The village which Vizcaino named the *Costa de Barcas* (Coastal Area of Small Boats) was probably the same village which Cabrillo had called *El Pueblo de las Canoas.*

The extraordinary boats were as long as 24 feet, and carried 10 or more men at a time. They were skillfully made of planks tied together with leather thongs and caulked with asphalt: "so well constructed and built that since Noah's Ark a finer and lighter vessel with timbers better made has not been seen." To those watching, the canoes moved "so swiftly they seemed to fly."[3]



Fray Junipero Serra, O.F.M.

A century and a half after Vizcaino's exploration Don Jose de Galvez was sent to Veracruz as Inspector General of New Spain. Through Galvez' influence Carlos III, King of Spain, ordered that California should be occupied so that it would not be lost to another nation. Presidios (military garrisons) were to be founded along the frontier, and also a chain of missions so that Christianity could be spread throughout the new land. Fray Junipero Serra, a Franciscan, would be President of the Missions, and Captain Gaspar de Portola would be the military leader.

Galvez and Serra discussed plans for establishing the missions. They both felt that after founding one at San Diego and another at Monterey, a third should be placed in an intermediate spot and named San Buenaventura.[4]

The Franciscan Saint Bonaventure was born Giovanni de Fidanza in 1221. There are a number of anecdotes which offer differing views of the origin of the name "Buenaventura." Hubert Howe Bancroft, California historian, quotes the ac-

Saint Bonaventure (San Buenaventura)

count about Giovanni given in the Provincial Records in the California Archives: "St. Francis of Assisi, meeting him one day and foreseeing his future greatness, exclaimed *'O buona ventura!'*"[5] The words, in Italian, mean "Oh good fortune." Friends adopted those words when speaking to him, and they became the man's accepted name, expressed in Spanish as *"Buenaventura."* Among Franciscans he was also called the Seraphic Doctor because of his excellent writings on theology.

Under the command of Captain of the Dragoons, Don Gaspar de Portola, the first land expedition to explore Upper California arrived in the summer of 1769. When the party left the area of what today is Los Angeles, the Santa Monica Mountains prevented them from traveling along the coast. Indians described the best path toward the north: it was through inland mountians along a route roughly corresponding to that of the present-day Golden State Freeway. From the mountains the Santa Clara River flowed toward the coast. They turned and followed the river to its outlet at the ocean.

Coastal Chumash Village

Drawn by Evelyn Nadeau

Courtesy Southwest Museum

On August 14th a short distance farther northwest along the coast, Portola found the largest Indian village he had seen in California on the banks of another river, probably the site noted earlier by Cabrillo and Vizcaino. The chronicler of the expedition, Fray Juan Crespi, wrote, "We beheld a regular pueblo, the most populous and best arranged of all we had thus far seen along the road. It is situated on a tongue or point of land on the same strand above which it rises so that it appears to dominate the waters. We counted about 30 large and capacious houses of a spherical form, well constructed and with roofs thatched with grass . . . there are no fewer than 400 souls. They are of good figure and disposition, active, industrious and inventive. Their dexterity and agility excels in the construction of their canoes . . . of graceful form with two prows." The Indians used long paddles with a blade on each end, paddling on alternate sides of the canoe so that the craft moved with incredible speed. When bartering, the Indians offered not only the usual things such as grass baskets and shells but also carved pieces of wood as well as quantities of seafood. Crespi wrote, "I named this pueblo *Asuncion de Nuestra Senora;* and I hope that such a good site to which nothing is lacking will be a good Mission through the intercession of this Grand Lady."[6] The pueblo was also called *Asumpta,* a synonym for *Asuncion* (both words mean "Ascent Into Heaven") for the feast day to be commemorated on the church calendar the day after the expedition arrived there. Alongside the village was the *Rio de la Asumpta* (now the Ventura River.)

Early records and maps establish Shisholop as the Indian name of the village. Because of constant erosion along the shore, only about one-fourth of the original village site still remains. It is likely that the southern edge once extended more than 300 feet beyond today's shoreline. Findings from excavations indicated that Shisholop probably originated about 1,000 A.D. It stood upon a bluff which rose east of what is now called Surfer's Point.[7]

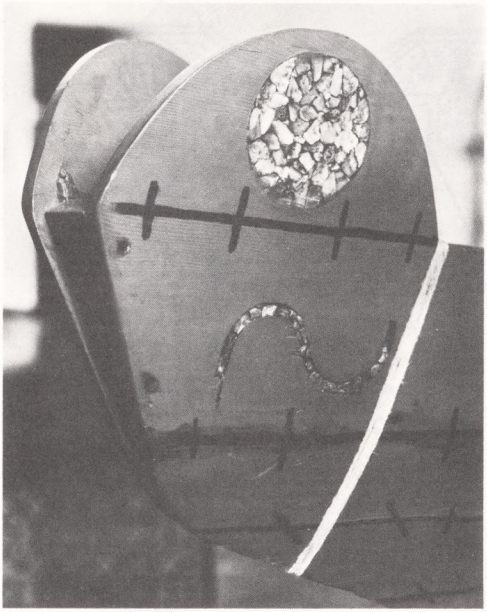
When Portola and his explorers continued along the Santa Barbara Channel to the northwest, they found a dense native

population and many large Indian villages *(rancherias)*. The Chumash, sometimes called the *Canalinos* (Channel Dwellers) were not related to the Shoshonean Indians farther south; and the languages were completely different.

Two years later 10 missionaries arrived at the Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo for assignment by Serra, President of the Missions. Two were chosen by him to found Mission San Buenaventura. They sailed from Monterey to San Diego, expecting to go from there north to the Indian *Rancheria de la Asuncion de Nuestra Senora.* Captain Pedro Fages accompanied them.

On their way north in October 1771, they stopped at the Mission San Gabriel which had been founded a month and a half earlier. They arrived to find a desperate situation. Indians had revolted against the mission guards, and an Indian had been killed. There was a possibilty that the uprising would spread. Furthermore, both the missionaries at San Gabriel were in ill health. Postponing all thought of establishing Mission San Buenaventura (as it turned out, a decade would pass before finally the mission was founded) Fages reassigned soldiers in order to increase the number at San Gabriel; and the new missionaries replaced the two who were ill.[8]

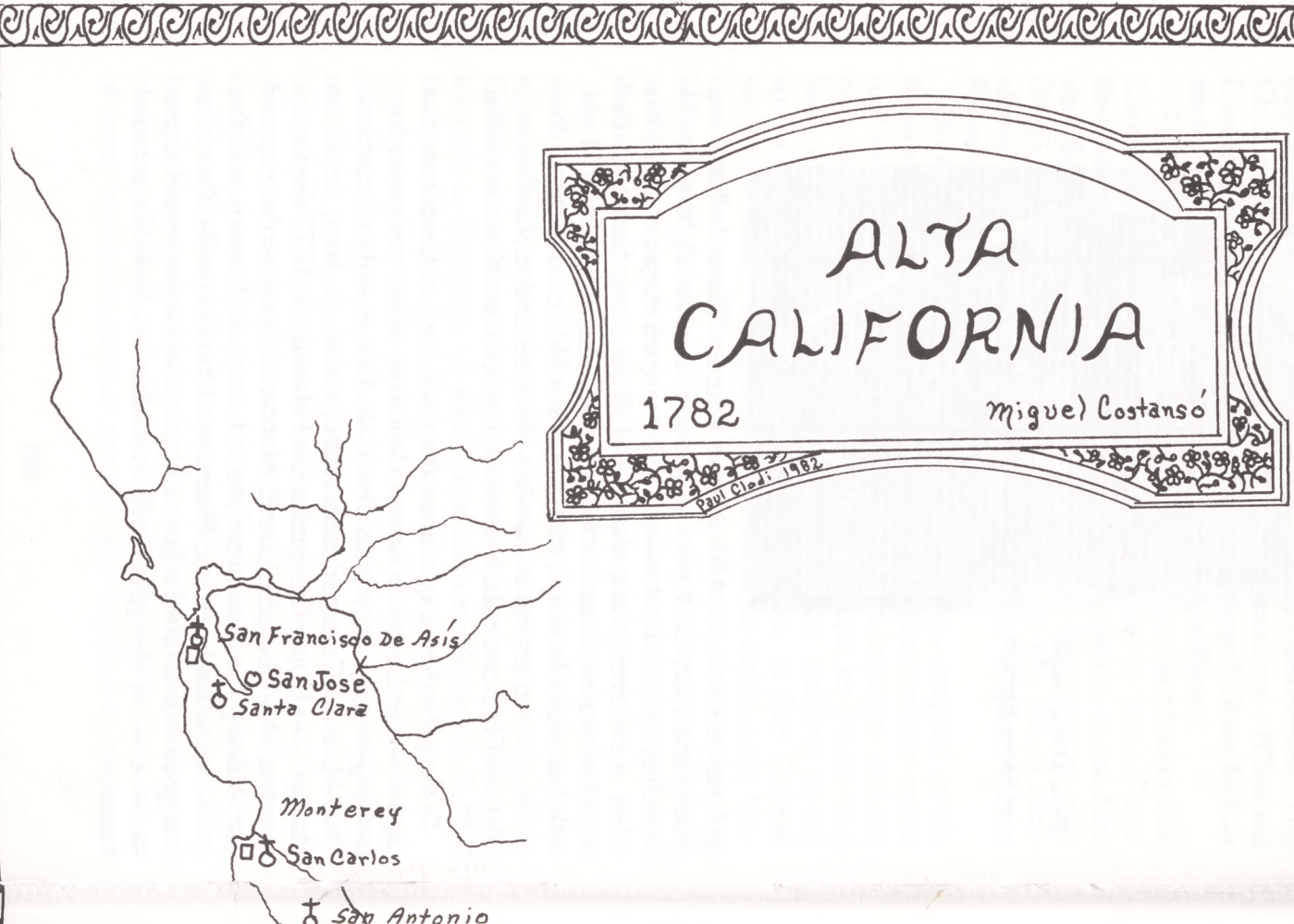
In 1772 and again in 1775 Captain Juan Bautista de Anza went from Sonora to Monterey in Alta California. He wanted to establish a route across the desert from the mainland to California via Yuma. After he reached Mission San Gabriel, his path to Monterey on each expedition led along the Santa Barbara Channel. Fray Pedro Font kept a diary of Anza's second expedition; and of the natives on the channel he wrote that the women wore deerskin skirts and little capes, while the men went without clothing. However the men were fond of ornaments. "Around their necks they wore long strings of shells. In their hair they stuck feathers, and frequently a *cuchillo,* a sort of dagger or knife blade made of bone or of wood with a flint point. They pierced their ears and noses, and hung in them various gewgaws, among which were to be seen hollow reeds filled with tobacco." Font delighted in the culture of these highly industrious natives, who excelled in basketry



Prow of the canoe at Santa Barbara

and stone work. In addition he wrote, "These Indians are great fishermen and very ingenious. Above all, they build launches . . . made of several planks which they work with no other tools than their shells and flints . . . Some of the launches are decorated with little shells and all are painted red with hematite. In shape they are like a little boat without ribs, ending in two points somewhat elevated and arched above, the two arcs not closed but remaining open at the points like a V."[9]

During the first years after the founding of California the capital was at Loreto in Lower California where the governor, more generally known as the Civil Commandant, resided. The Military Commandant, subordinate to him, lived in Monterey in Upper California. On February 3, 1777 the headquarters changed places and Monterey became the capital. The Military Commandant moved south to Loreto, and the governor moved north to Monterey. Don Felipe de Neve, the first governor to hold office in Upper California, would prove to be one of the great administrators in Spanish colonial history.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CALIFORNIA
1782
Miguel Costansó
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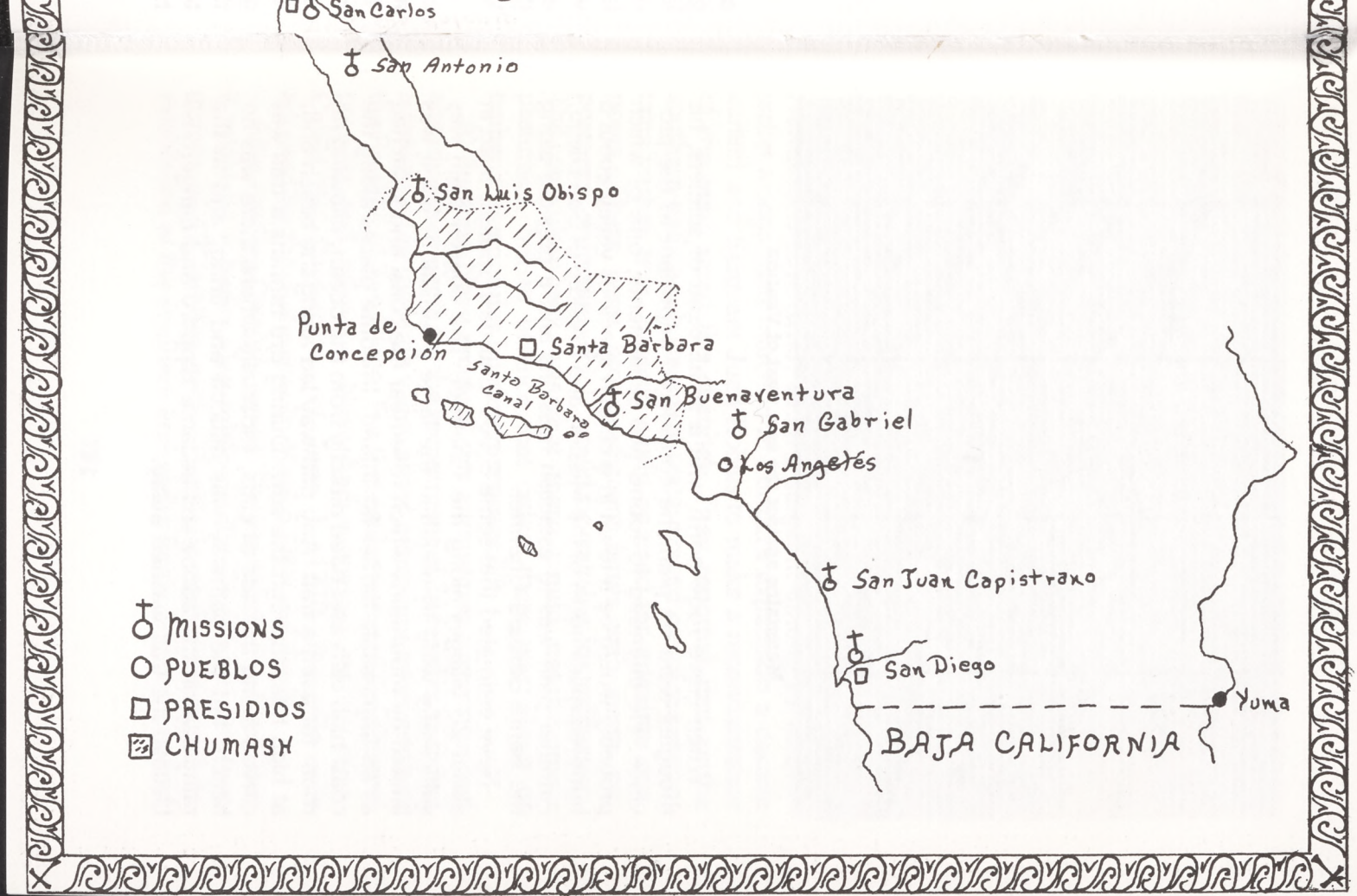
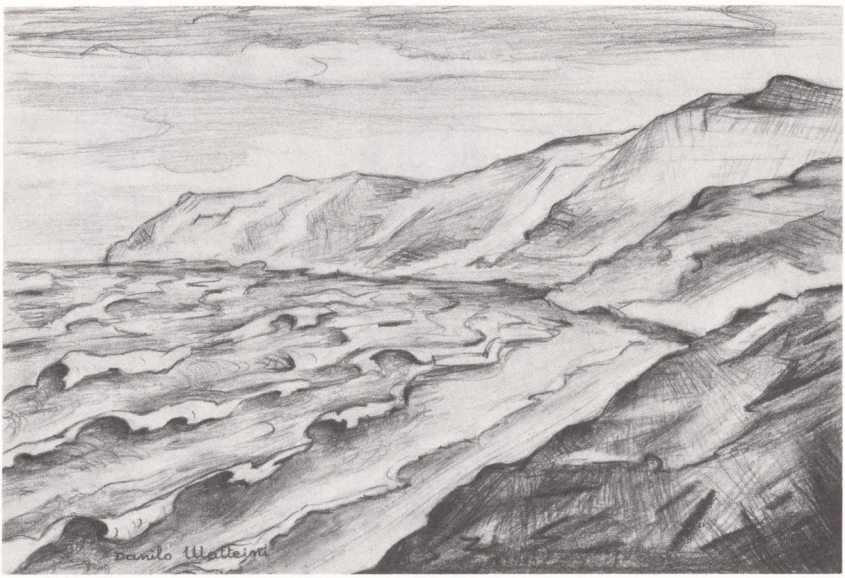
Santa Clara
Monterey
San Carlos
San Antonio


San Carlos
San Antonio
San Luis Obispo
Punta de Concepción
Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara Canal
San Buenaventura
San Gabriel
Los Angeles
San Juan Capistrano
San Diego
Yuma
BAJA CALIFORNIA
MISSIONS
PUEBLOS
PRESIDIOS
CHUMASH



Mountains against the sea, west of Ventura

When Neve rode north with a small band of soldiers, his thoughts were on plans he considered important to the province. He intended to found two settlements, one of which probably would be a town in a certain spacious valley about a hundred miles north of the Mission and Presidio of San Diego. Another plan was to establish missions and a presidio along the Santa Barbara Channel.

Neve estimated that some 8,000 Chumash Indians lived in about 28 villages along the Channel. The coastal plain was sufficiently wide to maintain the large population, but it was limited by mountains which rose near the coast and stretched as an impassable barrier far inland. In some places along the coast high cliffs ascended directly from the ocean, allowing no room for even a trail. Any pathway led along the beach and, at high tide, through the surf. During dry months a trail was carved along the side of cliffs, especially where there was no beach; but the pathway was difficult and tiring, and in the rainy season the adobe soil became slippery and dangerous. Usually the trail washed away.

Neve saw the danger that, if anything antagonized the Indians, they could close the road entirely. Yet the narrow pass between the mountains and the water's edge was strategic for communication between the Presidio of San Diego in the south and those of San Francisco and Monterey in the north. Also, missions in that area would be links in the chain established throughout California.

The governor explained his ideas in letters to Teodoro de Croix, Commandant General of the Interior Provinces of New Spain (California was one of the provinces). The two men agreed that the need was urgent. They decided that Mission San Buenaventura should be established at the southern end of the channel, Mission La Purisima Concepcion at the northern end and Mission Santa Barbara in the middle where there would also be a presidio.

Before completing his plans, Neve sent Lieutenant Jose Francisco Ortega (who, when a sergeant among 27 leatherjacket troops, had marched in Portola's expedition a decade earlier) and Sergeant Juan Robles to make a reconnaissance of the land along the channel. They reported that at the southern end "a rich stream of water flowed out of the mountains in that area. It could easily be used for irrigation purposes. There were broad adjacent lands with every appearance of fertility which would be suitable for cultivation. The one drawback was that there would not be much pasturage, but to balance that defect there was plenty of timber and stone for building purposes."[10]

At the time Neve received this enthusiastic report, he had already asked Croix for the recruitment of 24 families to found a settlement in the large valley about a hundred miles north of the Presidio of San Diego. For that settlement and the channel presidio and missions, Neve had suggested certain rules. Called the *Reglamento* of June 1, 1779, the plan was adopted by the authorities in Mexico City and Cadiz.

After reading Ortega's report, Neve suggested to Croix that it might be a better idea to divide the 24 families into two groups of 12 families each. Then one settlement could be established at the southern end of the Santa Barbara Channel

on the site which Ortega considered so promising, and another settlement could be founded on the Santa Ana River nearer San Diego. But recruiting efforts went poorly. Even after a year it was impossible to find 24 families who would agree to settle in the isolated frontier of California. Eventually only 11 arrived to found *El Pueblo de la Reyna de Los Angeles* in the large valley which Neve had chosen first.[11]

Soldiers to garrison the Santa Barbara Presidio and to guard the missions were to travel with the settlers for Los Angeles. In Los Alamos on the mainland, military recruits and their families gathered with the volunteer settlers and their families. The settlers were to cross the Gulf of California and go north up the Peninsula of Baja California. Seventeen recruits and their families would go with them under the leadership of Ensign Ramon Laso de la Vega.

Thirty-five other soldiers (30 of them with families) under the leadership of three officers, would go directly up from Sonora over the Anza Trail with Captain Fernando de Rivera. That route led across the Colorado River. They came to the river at a time when the waters were swollen. Some of the animals were obviously too exhausted to be able to get across. Rivera divided his company. All soldiers with families continued on to San Gabriel Mission.

The other five remained with Rivera (at a site near today's City of Yuma) along with an officer and several soldiers from Monterey who had come to increase the military guard. They kept about 250 animals, to rest and wait until the river would be easier to cross. Their stay was to prove disastrous. The animals devoured the already meagre pasturage needed by the Yumas who lived along the Colorado. The Indians had other grievances against the Spaniards also; and their resentment culminated in an uprising during which Rivera and all his men were killed.

On September 4, 1781 the Pueblo of Los Angeles was founded. That same fall the channel missions and presidio were to have been established. But Governor Neve realized that the rainy season was approaching, the worst time of the year for doing the necessary construction. In addition,

Teodoro de Croix sent word that he wanted all the soldiers to be available for reprisals against the Yumas. Forty temporary huts were erected at San Gabriel to house the soldiers and their families through the winter. Six missionaries were expected to arrive by springtime from the College of San Fernando at Mexico City, two for each of the intended new missions.

Impatiently everyone awaited spring. The new missionaries failed to arrived by March, but Serra was eager to proceed with the founding of San Buenaventura. He decided to serve there himself so that plans for the mission could go ahead with no more delay. He came south from the Mission of San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo near the Montery Presidio; and Fray Pedro Benito Cambon came up from the Mission San Diego de Alcala to join him.

Some of the soldiers and their families had been at San Gabriel since the middle of July, and even the last arrivals had been there since the middle of August. The frustration of the long wait increased with each day. Now all thought was focused upon the time of departure.

For Governor Neve this was to be the culmination of plans he had worked on through four years. He considered the establishment of the presidio and missions along the Santa Barbara Channel so important that he himself would go with the expedition, the only one during all his years as governor which he supervised personally.

On March 26, 1782 the largest expedition that had been seen in California set out from San Gabriel Mission. It included Governor Neve, President Serra, Fray Cambon, Lieutenant Ortega, Ensign Arguello, three sergeants, two corporals, 60 soldiers with their families, 10 soldiers temporarily assigned as an escort from a company in Monterey, Indians who had been converted to Christianity, muleteers and servants. Hundreds of animals were herded with the expedition. For San Buenaventura Mission there were 103 cattle, mules and horses; 44 sheep, goats and pigs.

After only one day's march, a courier arrived in camp. He brought word that Captain Pedro Fages had come from Mex-

ico City and was at San Gabriel Mission. Soldiers were waiting at the Colorado River to serve in a campaign against the Yuma Indians if Neve chose to be involved in that instead of the project on the Santa Barbara Channel. Reluctantly the governor retraced his steps for the necessary conference with Fages, but he ordered the channel expedition to continue.

The travelers were then in the area of today's City of Glendale. From there they rode westward along the San Fernando Valley and through the mountains at the far end, from Calabasas to Conejo Mountain which they traversed on the western slope. Then the expedition descended to the coastal plain. A short distance beyond the Santa Clara River they came to the Indian Village of La Asuncion on March 29. The next day a site close to the beach and adjoining the village was chosen for the new mission. There a cross was raised and an altar constructed with a shelter of branches.

On March 31, 1782, Easter Sunday, the soldiers and their families gathered. Indians joined them. Fray Serra began the ceremony by which the new mission was founded, reverently dedicating it to San Buenaventura. It was the ninth in the chain of missions in Alta California.

According to Governor Neve's specific instructions, gifts were brought for the Indians, and everyone in the expedition was directed to show kindness in dealing with them. At the same time the guards were to be constantly alert for any possible attack, remembering the sudden uprising on the Colorado River.

Work began immediately, with enthusiastic help from the Indians. Within two weeks a palisade about 11 ft. high surrounded a large enclosure of approximately 110 ft. by 137 ft. A small warehouse had been erected, to hold supplies.[12] Soldiers had hewn lumber for the construction of buildings, whose walls would be made of stakes, a latticework of branches and a plaster of mud. The community was to include a chapel, a house for the friars (to be built entirely of wood) a garrison and houses for the families. So that farming could begin, work was started on an aqueduct to bring water from a nearby stream.[13]

Spanish Leather-jacket soldier

Governor Neve, back at the San Gabriel Mission, wrote to Croix that it would be wisest to proceed with the project of the Santa Barbara Channel rather than interrupting it to begin a campaign on the Colorado River. Then he returned north, taking Fages and his men with him. The work at the new mission was progressing so well that the governor soon continued on his way to found the presidio at Santa Barbara. Serra went with him to be ready to establish the next mission, but Cambon remained at Santa Buenaventura, as well as 14 soldiers and their families. Sergeant Pablo Antonio Cota was left in command of the guard. By summer two other missionaries arrived, Francisco Dumetz and Vicente Santa Maria; and Fray Cambon was able to leave.

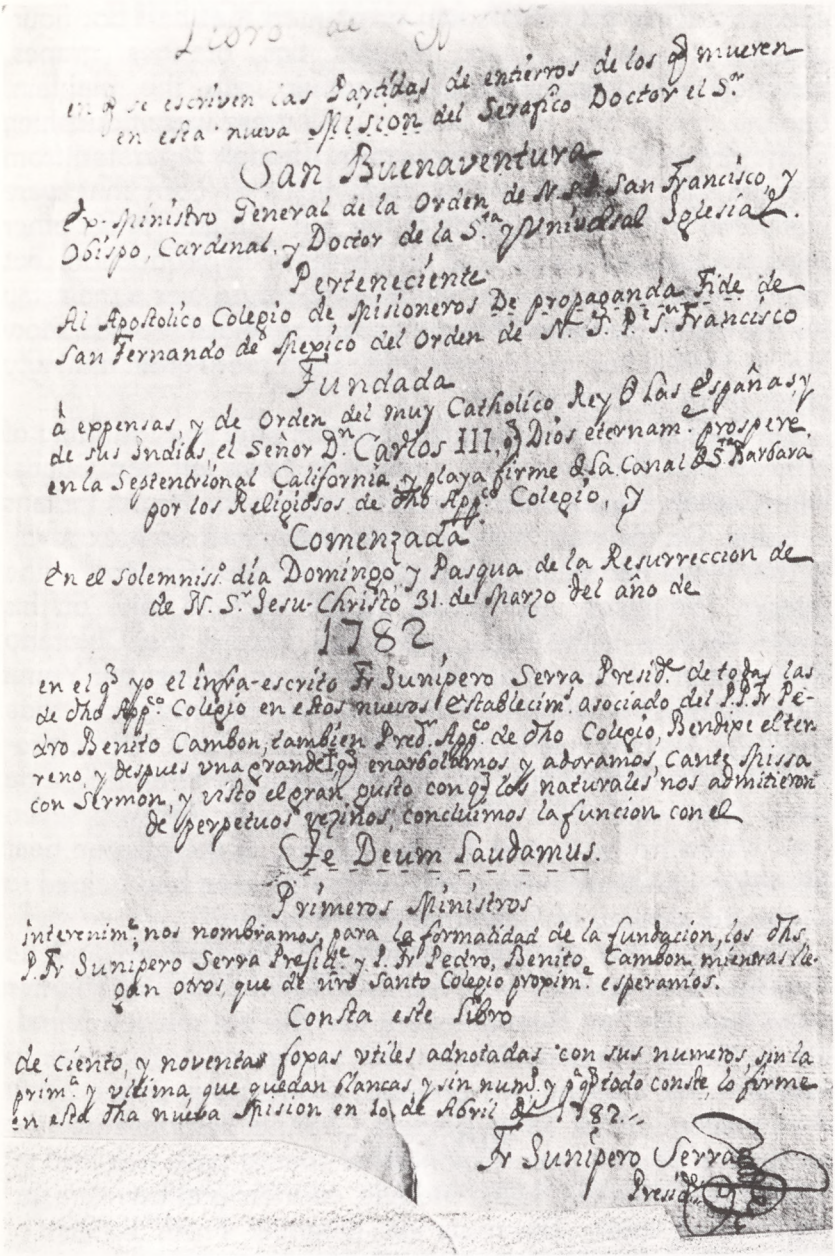
The mission guards were called "leather-jacket soldiers." Their coats, without sleeves, were made of tough leather for protection against arrows. Leather chaps fastened to the pommels of their saddles covered their legs when riding through thickets. Their shields were constructed of two thicknesses of bullhide, to deflect lances or arrows. Their swords were carried in leather sheaths. Most of the soldiers in California were leather-jackets.[14]

The governor and the church authorities often engaged in a serious tug-of-war, each feeling its own influence should have priority. Beginning with the San Buenaventura Mission, Neve intended that he would limit the missionaries to religious instruction and the conversion of Indians. This would have greatly dimished the importance of the missions. But he was outmaneuvered. Supplies for the church (vestments, bells and utensils) and also for agricultural work had been stored at San Gabriel and were brought along. Therefore San Buenaventura became an agricultrual mission, as earlier missions had been, with resident Indians. Before long the Franciscans were able to convince the Spanish king and his viceroy to countermand Neve's plans. This meant that every new mission continued according to the system followed before. [15]

The simple huts erected for the soldiers and their families were the start of the community of Ventura. The homes were essentially primitive: floors were simply the ground itself, packed hard; walls were a series of stakes driven into the ground, with branches interwoven in basket-style and a plaster of mud added; for a roof, poles were tied in place and a thatch covering laid over all. Later, permanent homes were built of adobe (sun-baked bricks of clay mixed with straw). by May 1788 seven of those homes had been completed.[16]

Sergeant Pablo Antonio Cota commanded the guards from the founding of the mission in 1782 until 1787, when he was assigned to Santa Barbara Presidio; the next year he was promoted to ensign. Few names of the other original residents are known. On April 27, 1782 the first person baptized at the San Buenaventura Mission was Jose Crescencio, the two day old son of Eugenio Valdez, a soldier, and Sebastiana Josefa Quintexa. On April 15 the first funeral was held, a service for Jose Leon Rodriguez, three days old. On August 30 the first marriage united Alejandro de la Cruz and Maria Concepcion Montiel.[17]

A decade after the mission's founding the English navigator George Vancouver visited it on his ship the DISCOVERY. He reported, "The garden of Buena Ventura far exceeded anything I had before met with in these regions . . . not one



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de sus Indias, el Señor D.n Carlos III. q Dios eternam. prospere,
en la Septentrional California, y playa firme de la Canal de Santa Barbara
por los Religiosos de dho Apl.co Colegio, y
Comenzada
En el Solemnissimo dia Domingo de Pasqua de la Resurreccion de
de N. S.r Jesu-Christo 31. del Marzo del año de
1782.
en el q yo el infra-escrito Fr Junipero Serra Presid.te de todas las
de dho Apl.co Colegio en estos nuevos Establecim.tos asociado del P. F. Pe-
dro Benito Cambon, tambien Pred.te Apl.co de dho Colegio, Bendixe el Eter-
reno, y despues una grande Cruz enarbolamos, y adoramos, Cantè Missa
con Sermon, y visto el gran gusto con q los naturales nos admitieron
de perpetuos vezinos, concluimos la funcion con el
Te Deum Laudamus.
Primeros Ministros
interinam.te nos nombramos, para la formalidad de la fundacion, los dhos
P. F. Junipero Serra Presid.te y P. F. Pedro Benito Cambon mientras lle-
gan otros que de vro Santo Colegio propim.te esperamos.
Consta este Libro
de ciento, y noventas hojas utiles adnotadas con sus numeros sin la
prim.a y ultima que quedan blancas, y sin num.o y q todo conste lo firme
en esta dha nueva Mision en 10. de Abril de 1782.
Fr Junipero Serra
Presid.te

First page of the record books contains the signature of "Fray Junipero Serra, President."

species having yet been sown or planted that had not flourished . . . apples, pears, plumbs, figs, oranges, grapes, peaches and pomegranates, together with the plantain, banana, cocoa nut, sugar cane . . . All these were flourishing in the greatest health and perfection, though separated from the sea-side only by two or three fields of corn that were cultivated within a few yards of the surf." In later times other missions became larger and surpassed it in production, but during early years Mission San Buenaventura was a mainstay for the Santa Barbara Channel area. Provincial records show that in 1800 it had more cattle and raised more grain than any other place in California.[18]

On August 21, less than five months after the founding of Mission San Buenaventura, Governor Neve left San Gabriel with Captain Fages and 60 men to engage the Yuma Indians in battle. On the way, a courier brought word from Mexico City that Neve had been promoted to Inspector General of the Interior Provinces, and Fages turned back to take on his responsibilities while Neve continued toward the Colorado River. After a brief, inconclusive campaign against the Yuma Indians, most of whom failed to appear for battle, he rode south for his new role in the government. After a further promotion to succeed Croix as Commandant General, Felipe de Neve died within two years. His death was followed seven days afterward by that of Junipero Serra, in the mission near Monterey. Each of those great, dedicated men had helped to shape the destiny of California permanently.[19]

The two other channel missions, Santa Barbara and La Purisima Concepcion, were not established until four and five years later, so San Buenaventura was the last mission founded by Serra. Similarly Neve's last important project was to establish the mission and presidio. Continuous peace along the coastland of the Santa Barbara Channel demonstrated the wisdom of Neve's plan. The narrow coastal path was trod by mule trains, soldiers, friars, Indians, couriers and travelers going north or south. The route was essential. From the date of its founding, San Buenaventura had an integral place in the lifeblood of California.

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CREDITS

The two line drawings are from *Early California costume,* courtesy of Stanford University Press.

Canoe was photographed by Travis Hudson for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; the prow is by Mark Lassoff.

FIRST MASS OFFERED IN MISSION CHURCH BY A FUTURE MARTYR

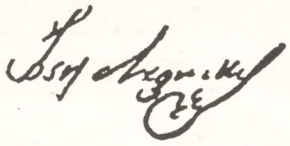
By Msgr. Francis J. Weber

San Buenaventura Mission was the scene of an event on the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, September 10th, 1809, which brought joy and satisfaction to the missionaries, neophytes and settlers. The Rev. Jose Ignacio Maximo Arguello, the son of Captain Jose Dario Arguello of Santa Barbara, visited the mission and there offered the first solemn mass in the recently dedicated church. It was indeed a doubly happy occurence for he was the first native Californian raised to the priesthood.

Jose's father, later to become a prominent, influential and respected man in California, had been in the company of soldiers who, in July of 1781, escorted 40 families of recruits by the way of the Colorado River to San Gabriel. The group lingered at the mission until March of 1782, before moving on to establish the Presidio at Santa Barbara. The wife of the youthful ensign, Ignacia, was about to give birth and remained behind at San Buenaventura. On June 8th an infant son was born and on that same day was baptized by Fray Miguel Sanchez in the mission church.

The oldest of nine children[1] born to the Arguellos, Jose grew to manhood at Santa Barbara. He was the first person to be confirmed in the original chapel of the presidio by Fray Junipero Serra in 1783.[2] When he later manifested a desire to study for the priesthood, Jose's father sent him to Mexico City where he pursued the necessary philosophical and theological studies.

Ordained for the diocesan ministry at Sonora, Arguello sought permission for a visit to his family and friends in Santa Barbara. It was *en route* that California's proto-priest paused at San Buenaventura. As soon as Fray Jose Senan heard about the impending visit, he began preparations for the solemn festivities. The mission choir was rehearsed, and all



Signature of Jose Dario Arguello

was put in readiness. The church was gayly decorated as never before, with every imaginable color of flowers.

Fray Jose Antonio Urresti preached an eloquent sermon on the priesthood, noting that young Arguello was only the first in what would hopefully be a long line of native responses to the call of the Gospel. The event was duly noted in the margins of the *Registro de Bautismos,* where Fray Jose Senan recorded that "the Rev. Don Jose Ignacio Arguello sang the first High Mass," assisted by Frays Marcos Antonio de Vitorio and Luis Gil Taboada.

The new priest subsequently journeyed north and visited with his parents at Santa Barbara before returning to his diocese. Very likely he stopped once again at San Buenaventura, though there is no record of a second visit. Nothing more is known about him except the notation by Hubert Howe Bancroft that Arguello "later became curate of Torin, on the Yaquis River, in Sonora."

The priest was subsequently killed in an uprising of the Yaquis; and thus won another distinction, that of having a place on the roll of California's martyrology.

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Spain's Coat-of-Arms

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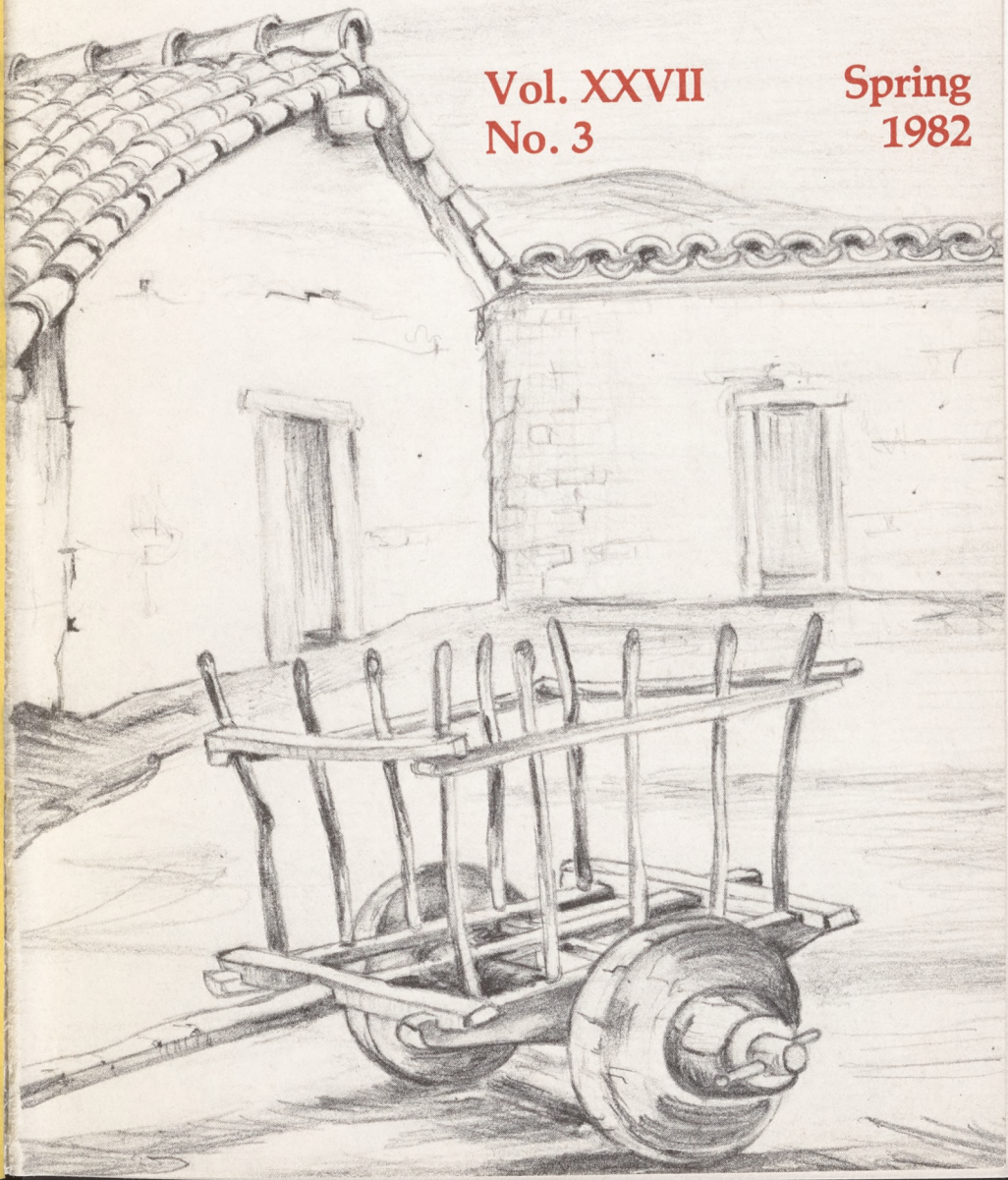

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Grant W. Heil, Editor

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By Robert O. Browne

Notice

Edwin M. Sheridan was the editor of the first account, and it is due to him that both have been preserved. Bob Browne was also the supervisor of the restoration of the Ortega Adobe.

After employing the first three mailers to publicize the Bicentennial, this outside cover has been used to call attention to anniversaries of note. One hundred years ago the first volume in Bancroft's history was published.

ADOBE HOMES OF OLDEN DAYS IN SAN BUENAVENTURA

By **E. M. Sheridan**

Being the center and first settled section of Ventura County, most of the adobe homes of the inhabitants were located in the immediate vicinity of the old Mission of San Buenaventura. And in the building of these homes the trend was towards the San Buenaventura River and, of course, westward from the church. The picture which comes to one's mind would be the mission church towering high on the eastern edge of the village while the homes of the villagers, low and oftentimes flatroofed, extended in two straggling lines westward to the river's bank. As there were no streets thought of in those days, there could have been little more than a bridle path westward between the houses. Nor could this be straightaway, as the houses were put down without thought as to regularity of the frontage.

It is of the town, or village homes in San Buenaventura, that this article would have to do. The following story of the homes in San Buenaventura is left us in the story of Luis Arellanes who well recalls the appearance of the mission town and the old adobes in it, their builders and, as well, tells of a few which were scattered sparsely about nearby sections of the county. His story, which places all the village adobes and gives the names of the builders, is also interesting in that he adds some bits of family history which tells us something of the lives of the people of that old day. This is the record which a pioneer of the sixties has left.

[The informant does not mention the Arnaz place which was located where now stands the Hogue-Kellogg warehouse, an extensive holding and on which was located a large adobe which afterwards became the American Hotel. Arnaz had extensive orchards. *E.M.S.*]

EARLY VENTURA HISTORY

By Luis Arellanes

Teodore Arellanes, the first owner of the Rancho El Rincon, was my father's[1] brother. Teodore sold the ranch to Dr. [Matthew Henry (Mateo E.)] Biggs who married a daughter[2] of Teodore. Prior to leaving for Chile, Dr. Biggs sold the ranch to Benigno Guiterrez;[3] but I never saw him after his first departure. Dr. Biggs was a very honorable doctor, he was peaceable and rendered assistance to the poor as well as to the rich. He came here in 1851 and died in Chile, having returned there after a second trip here. The possession of this ranch was never questioned, and there were no disputes at any time regarding the title.[4]

The first owners of the Santa Ana Rancho were Cosme Vanegas and Crisogono Ayala. Cosme Vanegas came from Mexico, and Crisogono Ayala was a native son. There were many Ayala brothers in these parts . . . Crisogono Ayala's homestead was what is now the Waterhouse[5] ranch. The Vanegas house was located near Crisogono's house. The Arnaz house is that which the Ferguson[6] people are occuping at present. When Mrs. [Bernardina (Alvarez)] Vanegas died she had many children who were very carefree. Pablo Vanegas was the father of Ramon Vanegas, Ramon Vanegas is the father of Babe Vanegas,[7] *et al;* Pablo was the son of Cosme,

1. Jose Regino Arellanes whose father was Manuel Ramirez Arellano.
2. Marie de Jesus de Arellanes de Biggs.
3. Dr. Biggs gave power of attorney in 1873 to Charles B. Bates, and he later became the owner.
4. An area of 4,459.63 acres was granted by the interim governor, Jose Castro, on October 10, 1835 and patented November 22, 1872.
5. William T. Waterhouse.
6. William Fergeson or Ferguson.
7. John Vanegas, horsebreaker.

Juan Ygnacio (Nacho) Rodriguez

the original. The mother conveyed to [Don Jose] Arnaz giving him all her interest in the Santa Ana, with a promise from Arnaz that he would maintain the family, which he did well until her death. Then the title passed to Arnaz; but Ayala maintained his interest in the southern portion. Arnaz sold to [Captain Richard] Robinson; Robinson deeded portions of his land to different individuals in consideration of their services in making wood.

I knew Henry Dubbers well. He came here and purchased some lands from Francisco Ayala. He first lived at the old home place in the old adobe at the north side of West Main Street, then later lived in an old frame house in the Santa Ana. Dubbers was a very intelligent and sharp man. He was of German descent, was an honest man and did a lot of good for his community. He bought the home place from Pablo Gonzales, I believe, although I am a little hazy on this point. He died on the old Dubber's home place on West Main Street, after having undergone an operation. Mr. Dubbers first came here alone, and Mrs. [Christina Wilhelmina (Osterman)] Dubbers followed.

The father of [Juan Ygnacio] Rodriguez, local pioneer, was the first owner of the Rancho San Miguelito. They called him "Venado", meaning deer. I knew him well and his name was Ramon. He had three sons, and Juan Antonio Rodriguez (dead). [Ramon] Rodriguez was killed by robbers between Carpinteria and Santa Barbara (near Ortega hill) and his widow[8] married an uncle[9] of her deceased husband. The mother then sold the ranch to the Taylor[10] people for $8,000.

When I came here there were very few houses, and a great many Indians. There was an old Indian whom they called Huerta de Como Buru who was located in the southwest corner of the town. Juan de Jesus, an extremely old Indian, who died up the coast, remembered the construction of the [San

8. Juana Tico Rodriguez.
9. Antonio Rodriguez.
10. Virginia (Donohu) and Green B. Taylor.

Mission Indian Orchestra:

Andres; Juan de Jesus (Tumamait);
Chico; Jacinto Jesus; Ziano; and Jose Maria

Buenaventura] Mission when I knew him. He was a singer and a musician of the mission. A great many of the Indians went to the Anacapa Island in canoes, but the mission fathers brought them back.[11] However, some returned to the island in their canoes. The mission fathers tried to Christianize them but they would not submit to the regime.[12]

The Pacifico Sanchez house was the first house on Main Street west of the mission cemetery; then came Juan Sanchez'

11. Revolt of 1824.

12. The fact that Indian customs persisted at the missions made it easy for the neophytes to apostatize during the decay following secularization.

Ramon Valdez Family

place; then Juan Arreola's[13] house which was a frame building; next was the Ramon Valdez place; and immediate-

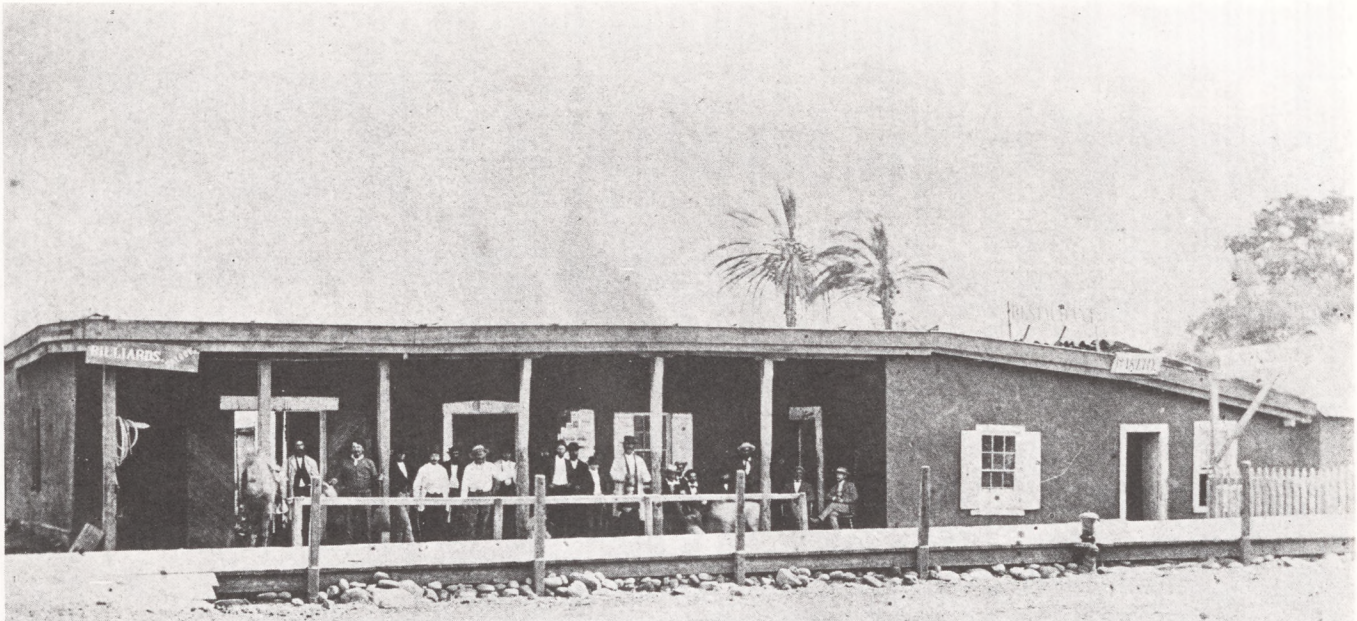
13. Also Juan Bautista Ariola or Arriola.

Labelled the "Oldest Adobe in Ventura," this brick wall fronted a porch

ly west was the Rafael Lopez place. Don Pedro Constancia bought the Valdez property and built the present house with the brick front there; then came the house of Leandro Gonzales, which was an adobe; and immediately west there was a house in which Alfreda [Ortega] lived with Candelaria Dominguez, mother of the Ortegas.

A party of the name of [Manuel Antonio] Anguisola built the Gonzales house, and sold to Gonzales. Carlos Lebouban built the Augustin Solari house. The next house was that of Victor Ustusaustegui, a Basque. Ustusaustegui sold to [Juan] Camarillo. Then came [Francisco] Menchaca, on the corner of The Avenue.[14] Across the street on the other corner was the Tico home place. The original owner of the Tico Tract[15] was Fernando Tico. He was the father of Edward and Fernando Tico, Jr.[16] Edward Tico is the papa of Olivia [(Tico) Montano]. Edward was born subsequent to Fernando's death. The other children were Jose Jesus, Ascension, Manuela and Eduveges. Another son by the name of Joaquin died young. Carlos Lebouban built another house. Then came Pablo Peralta, and adjoining Peralta on the west was the big Ayala house. Adjoining Ayala on the west was [Francisco] Arenas. Then came [Albert de] Chateaunauf who maintained a very attractive place and had an orchard on the same. Then came the Dubbers place, and adjoining it on the west was the Ortega adobe which was built by an old Indian *(Sic).*[17] In the early times there was an orchard in the river bottom and it was finally washed out.[18] Emidio Ortega, father of Ramon (oldest) purchased originally from an Indian. Victor Ustusaustegui married one of the Ortega girls,[19]

14. Where the Burnham building and service station are now. *E.M.S.*
15. The Tico Lot was only 28.9 acres.
16. Fernando Antonio Tico was called Fernando Tico after his father's death.
17. The story of the ridge pole of the Ortega roof is too well known.
18. The flood of 1862 also carried away the west room of the Ortega adobe.
19. Maria Ortega de Ustusaustegui.



Bautista Ysordy Building, said to be a bakery, saloon and recreation place; palms in the rear

By 1870 a wooden fence replaced the adobe wall

and Pablo [Antonio] Gonzales, the father of the present Pablo who is now with the city [street] force, married another of the sisters.[20] The youngest of the girls[21] married a Frenchman.[22]

The Bravo place was first owned by an Italian.[23] The old Dugene Pierre house, on the south side of Main Street west of the railroad, was washed out by the floods; after which, a party of the name of Bravo rebuilt a frame house. Saturnino Ruiz built a house at the corner of the railroad right of way and Main Street . . .

Then came the mission orchard which was all fenced with an adobe wall about four or five feet high. Immediately east of the mission orchard was found the Valencia Sanchez place. It was formerly occupied by an Indian. Vicencia Sanchez and Robert Dominguez lived together there where they conducted a hotel; and later married.[24] Adjoining, east of

20. Refugia Ortega de Gonzales.
21. Victoria (Ortega) Candolet.
22. Pierre (or Pedro) Candolet.
23. ?
24. This was later known as the Bautista Ysordy place from the man who built the present Palace Hotel, now a stage office. *E.M.S.*

Complex of Sanchez, and American and Spanish hotel properties

Dona Francesca Sanchez de Escandon

this place, was the Obiols place known as "Jabonera" where the mission fathers made soap.[25] Also it was there that, between Ruiz and [Manuel Antonio] Flores, was located the Juan de Dios Bravo place.

Jose Rivas (Jose Chiquito) was a half-brother of the mother of Fred Constancia. Fred was not a son of Constancia. He was a Garcia and merely raised by Constancia. Mercedes Avila came from a rich Los Angeles family. She was the wife of Jose de Arnaz. They were married in Los Angeles, and Mr. Arnaz was the agent of the mission here. Policarpia Lopez was the mother of Andrea Figueroa who married [Pedro] Constancia. They lived in a well constructed adobe south and across the street from the mission. I remember the floor in this house well: it was made of brick. Angel G. Escandon married a daughter[26] of Juan Sanchez.

25. Obiols kept a hotel there, and later William Ayers built the Ayers house there. It is now the American Restaurant building. *E.M.S.*

26. Francesca Sanchez de Escandon.

He was fairly well educated, he was a kind of a lawyer. Escandon had an adobe house in Block 47 of the city.[27] He was a short man, a gambler, and subject to drunkenness. He died after a spree in the Tico barn.

Dr. Poli's wife[28] was a daugher of Juan Sanchez. The Sanchez family was a large one . . . Dr. [Manuel Rodriguez de] Poli lived near the old schoolhouse (on the hill) at a place known as "Sebastapol". He constructed a flour mill near the Menchaca place on the Ventura Avenue. The mission water ditch from Casitas ended at the reservoir[29] on the hill back of the Constancia house where it emptied through a horse's head[30] and passed on to the plaza of the church.

There was a fountain on the church grounds, the water was conveyed across Main Street. There were thatched Indian villages standing on each side. These Indians farmed the Taylor ranch to wheat, and also some lands in the San Buenaventura Valley, delivering the produce to the mission fathers who made distribution of the same. The mission had thousands of cattle and sheep. It was the custom of the ranchers to give one head of stock in ten to the fathers.

I was the first one to convey water from the horse's head back of the Constancia property along the foothills and then down southerly through what is now known as the De Leon property, continuing on down until it emptied into the ocean. This ditch was prepared to take care of the water needs of the people located in the eastern end of the town.

27. Opposite the mission, just southeast on Main. *E.M.S.*

28. Encarnacion Sanchez de Poli.

29. This account has both a double error, and a mix-up of the early Spanish aqueduct with the later American water system.

30. *El Caballo.*

OLD ORTEGA ADOBE HISTORY BY A SCION[31] OF THE ORTEGA FAMILY

Dear Madam:[32] Am pleased to acknowledge your favor of the 7 inst. and note that you have leased the old adobe home. I do hope that some appreciation will be your reward for your efforts to keep alive landmarks exisiting: efforts of the old residents of the days gone by, days when the buildings outside the mission buildings would hardly total a score.[33] Residents of today, surrounded by commodities of our day have no idea of the hardships gone through by our predecessors when they undertook to build a home.

Earth was always at hand and, naturally, was made use of. So that in 1857, the year that the writer was born in a building similar to the one forming the subject of this letter, standing then where the Feraud store is now, my father[34] bought a lot 200 x 200, the site of the now called Plaza de Ortega. Having bought tile and brick from the mission fathers, the fact remained that there was no lumber or sawmills within hundreds of miles.

There was a building in the vicinity of where the Town of Fillmore now stands. The grantees of this site had built this house and occupied it many years; and it is presumed it was built about the time the Mission at Ventura was founded, and in some manner these people obtained lumber for roofing and other purposes. No tiles were in this building; but it was covered with dirt supported by bamboo tied closely together with rawhide, then a layer of grass on top, then the dirt; over the dirt was a coating of tar obtained from natural

31. Emilio C. Ortega.
32. Bessie (Elizabeth C.) Bush.
33. According to tradition there were 26 adobes.
34. Don Miguel Emido Ortega.

Ortega Adobe (the west room is gone and the east door is sealed up)

springs nine miles north of Ventura, or from springs on the road up the Santa Paula [Creek] to Nordhoff. After many years of hardship a band of Mojave Indians swooped upon the ranch, murdered the people and drove away the stock.[35]

For many years the ranch house remained a mute witness to the tragedy, cause of its solitude. My father decided to dismantle the adobe walls of the timber, and hauled it to Ventura with the aid of young mounted horsemen as bodyguards and Indians to drive the oxen, drawing a couple of two-wheeled carts[36] (the only vehicle existent in those days) made trips to the place until the object was accomplished. This trip of perhaps four days' duration took a good deal of preparation, as Indians were dangerous and there were many bears in the vicinity, making it dangerous to camp in those places. Firearms were scarce for proper protection, and the guards had to depend upon fleetness of their horses or the accuracy of their lariats[37] for their defense. The beam which supports the roof of the Ortega home had been serving the same purpose on the other building for seventy years, as also most of the timbers used for rafters, which in their natural round state were placed on the house.

The house (Ortega home) was built with a forty-foot frontage; but in [1862] the flood swept away a good deal of the land which stood between the house and the river, which held our cow and sheep corrals and our orchard. There was also a cabin built of regular lumber standing fifty feet west of the house on a slight elevation. When the floods were reported coming, the folks thought the old adobe was sure to be swept away so every article of clothing, furniture, etc. were piled into the frame house, even my younger brother's pet dog and lamb. Next morning at 3 a.m. the house and all belongings were swept into the sea. Our women folks were

35. Sgt. Rafael Lopez was stationed in Matilija Canyon to guard against such events.

36. *La carreta.*

37. *La reata.*

Ortega Adobe (the west room is gone and the east door is sealed up)

Don Miguel Emido Ortega
Descendant of Sgt. Jose Francisco de Ortega

left with only the clothes they had on. All the folks were taken away on horseback over near the mission for safety.

The flood also took one-half of the adobe building and left what now stands. You can never imagine the desolation of the surroundings. I can well remember how we ran along on the beach, scanning every nook in hopes of finding our pets, or some of the trunks, those old-fashiond cedar [chests] bound and covered with leather and held with brass nails and tacks, filled with clothes such as the old families of those days delighted in having. All was lost. There were no stores, hardly, and nothing nearer than Santa Barbara; all streams were swollen by the heavy rains.

Imagine our predicament and the worry it caused my father. I well remember him walking back and forth on the porch the next day after the flood. There still were streams of muddy water running in the center of the roads what are now called streets. Only the men folks stayed at the house. By the way, had all our belongings been left in the old house everything would have been saved, as not a drop of water came into the house. An idea seemed to have struck my father as he walked back and forth; he went into the house and looked toward the ceiling. It was muslin, and he ordered it taken down carefully. After being laundered it was made into underwear for the women folks.

Several rows of large pear, peach and fig trees were also washed away. There was at that time our nearest neighbors, Mr. Dubbers, his wife and two daughters and two boys. He had purchased a house east of the old house from a brother-in-law of mine, [Pablo] Gonzales, the father of the man who today cleans the streets of Ventura. Mr. Gonzales built the frame house which was swept away by the flood. The grapevine in the rear of the house was planted in 1867 by my mother. There was one grapevine, quite large, a short distance from where the one existing now stands. It was destroyed or broken off by a runaway steer.

Someone had given the information that the old house was built in 1735, which is not a fact. Someone was trying to

throw some romance into its history. As far as I can remember the houses standing on the north side of the street were the Tico[38] buildings of adobe and tile roofs at the northwest Ventura Avenue corner, going west; the second house stood some distance west, in the rear of which was also an adobe with tile roof (Julio Peralta) then along the road was an extensive adobe house roofed with dirt and tar (Francisco Ayala). Next was the Arenas home (Mrs. Josefa Arenas) adobe and shingle roof. Then the Dubbers', also adobe and shingles.

On the opposite side of the street (south) was a small frame house where lived Mr. [Juan de Dios] Bravo and family; east was Bautista Guevara and family; then an adobe with dirt and tar roof belonging to 'Nacho'[39] Rodriguez' mother; then another adobe and tar foot belonging to Don Jose Arnaz, and was opened as the stage station and run by Mr. [Volney A.] Simpson (American Hotel) one of the first Americans of Ventura; then came a frame house and blacksmith shop run by Sam Barnett, and last was an adobe and tile roof building and mission orchard, surrounded by an adobe wall from the old Palace Hotel along Main Street to where Feraud's[40] store stands; then south two blocks and east to Figueroa Street and back to Main Street.

I will mention something I consider wonderful: while in 1897 I took off the tile of the old house, as several of the round timbers that served as rafters were worm-eaten and decaying. I replaced these with timbers that had been long in use around the buildings of the old mission. I tested the solidity of the center beam; and I found it to be perfect, notwithstanding that it had served on a building before being placed there for seventy years. I tried to drive 20d spikes into it, and did not succeed in driving a single one. It was solid as iron and it was not possible to drive in over ¼ inch. I found

38. Don Fernando Tico.
39. Nickname of Juan Ygnacio Rodriguez.
40. Jules Feraud.

Don Fernando Tico
Grantee of Rancho Ojai and the Tico Plot

that over the rafters in an opposite direction was laid a mat of bamboo canes, squeezed closely together and tied with rawhide at intervals between the rafters. I found that after forty years most of that rawhide was as strong as if new. Also, there was a layer of grass, cut fresh, spread evenly over the bamboo; over the grass a coating of mud spread an inch thick to keep dust and air from blowing through. I found in many places that the grass looked fresh and green as though recently cut and cured. Then the tile on top.

I have an idea you will think that once I am wound up I can write forever, so I am going to burden you with deciphering it as it is. Had intended to have my stenographer write it over, but as she has a lot of trade letters to work upon, I had best send it on, lest I read it over and decide not to send it. Would be pleased to hear from you in your new enterprise and hope you can make a success of it. I will in all probability when driving north stop and view the old home, as I generally do, and would be pleased to meet you.

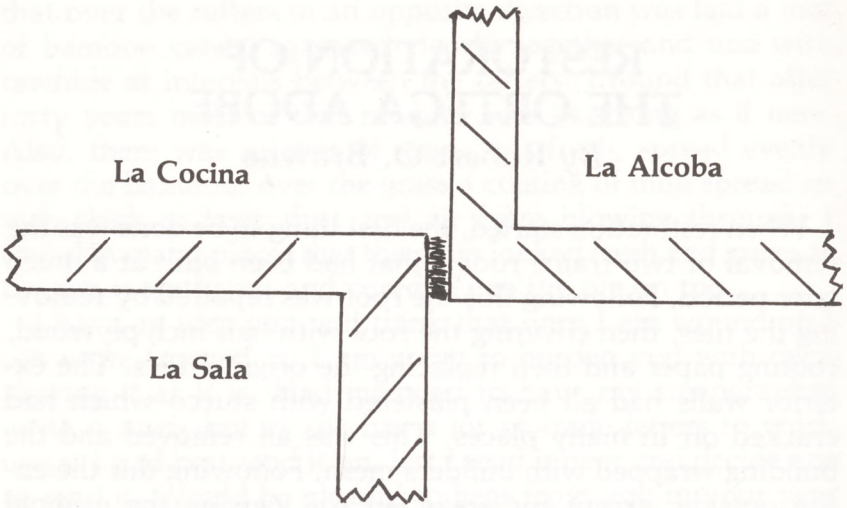
RESTORATION OF THE ORTEGA ADOBE

By **Robert O. Browne**

When restoration started, the first thing to be done was the removal of two frame rooms that had been built at a much later period. Following this the roof was repaired by removing the tiles, then covering the roof with half inch plywood, roofing paper and then replacing the original tiles. The exterior walls had all been plastered with stucco which had cracked off in many places. This was all removed and the building wrapped with builders mesh. Following this the entire outside, except for areas left for viewing the original adobe brick, was covered with a coating of cement plaster applied with gunite equipment.[41] Care being taken to follow as nearly as possible the contours of the walls and simulate the old appearance of the building.

The interior wall had been plastered with about one half inch of plaster consisting of sand and adobe. This had been painted at different times with white wash kalsomine and even coats of oil base paint totaling six layers. Some of the original plaster had fallen off. These areas were replastered with a mixture of sand, adobe and wilhold glue, all being done with a small trowel to give the same effect as the old parts of the walls. The areas that had the original plaster were scraped by hand to remove the old paint. Then it was repainted with modern flat coat paint. Once section of the wall was not altered but left for viewing. The ceilings were left in the condition in which we found them at the time of restoration.

41. This resulted in a double sealing, preventing evaporation of the moisture brought up by percolation.



At some time during the later years of occupancy concrete floors had been put in the building, the original having been the natural adobe. It was decided to leave this floor and cover it with a layer of adobe to give it the appearance of the old dirt floor. The front porch had a floor of mission made tiles. This was reconditioned; and a few replaced with ones found at the excavation of the mission building about 1968. Some of the original beams in the walls were badly destroyed by termites; these were replaced except for a few which were left for viewing.

All during the restoration work, measurements of walls and features were taken. Complete daily notes were made as well as drawings and photos as the work progressed. A cobble stone false fireplace in the main room was removed. A doorway which had been a part of the old building was revealed. On this wall was a crack from an earthquake which was filled, but notation made of it.

The foundations under the walls consisted in some places of one layer of beach cobbles laid just below the original ground surface. Under some of the walls no foundation had been used, but the walls rested directly upon the natural

ground level. The structure was built by four continuous walls with a forty foot front by twenty foot sides with a center partition making two rooms. This is shown by continuous walls and corners where the adobe bricks were laid.

There are two other rooms on the north and north east and these have "cold" joints where the bricks were laid after the main walls were built, as they merely butt up against the outside walls, the joint being filled with mud and plaster.

The rooms were furnished to depict the period of tthe transition from the Californian to the American, at which time there was an over-lapping of hand-made with the beginning of imported furnishings from the East coast. These furnishings do not necssarily duplicate those of the Ortega family. The living room, or *la sala,* was also the dining area, having a hand made table, chair and benches. The table service consisted of the prevalent Willow ware and Mexican *majolica* pottery, brass candle sticks and the newer coal oil lamps. The family portraits were on the walls. Rawhide rugs were the usual floor coverings. The kitchen, or *la cocina,* with a *figon,* or cooking stove which used charcoal for fuel, was the type prior to the introduction of the iron wood-burning stove. The bedroom, or *la alcoba,* with hand made bed and wash stand, was the customary furnishing. Religious pictures and a few toilet articles completed the room.

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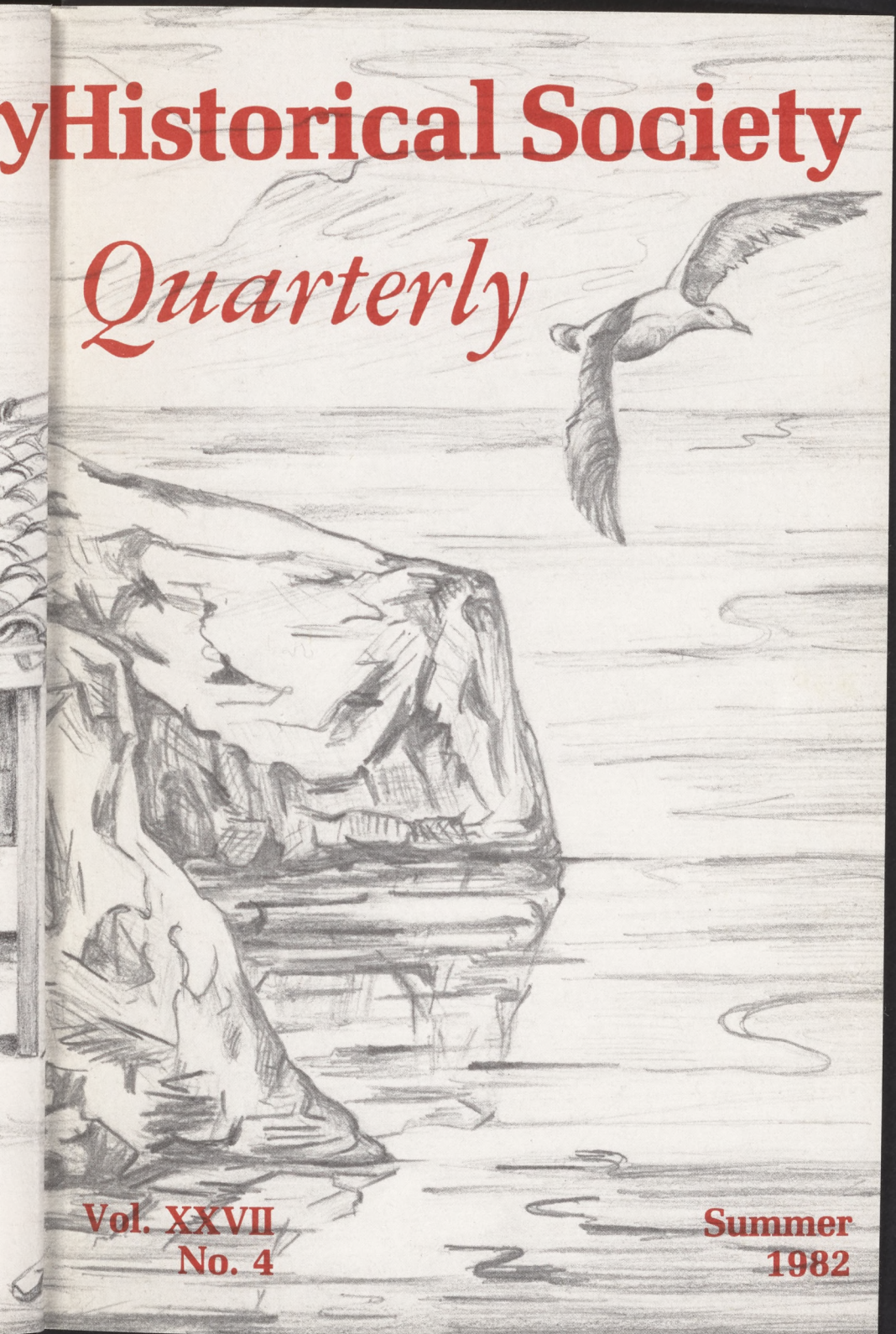

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Ventura County Historical Society

Quarterly

Grant W. Heil, Editor

Vol. XXVII, No. 4 Summer 1982

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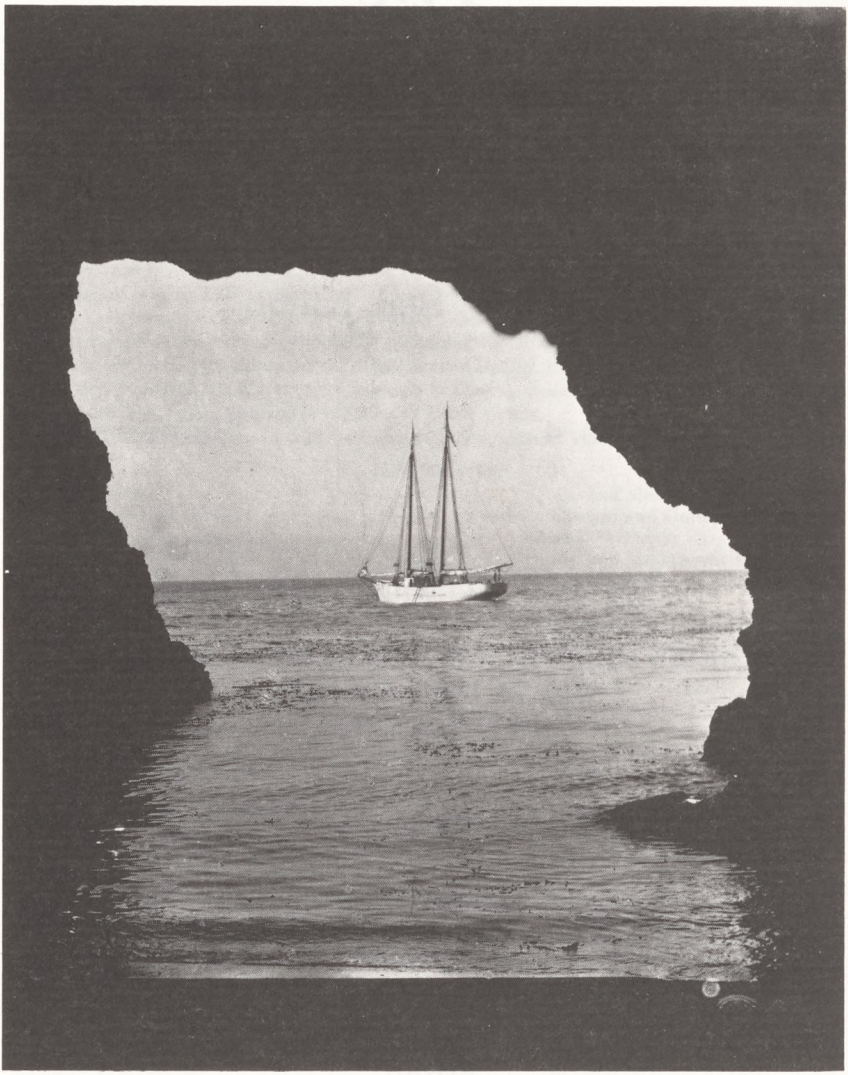
by Helen Caire

Notice

Miss Caire enlarged this account from her earlier draft and supplied most of the pictures, some from glass plates. The plants were photographed by Marla Daily. The map was drawn by Paul Clodi, and Danilo Matteini sketched the cover.

Errata

There are two corrections to make in the Spring 1982 issue: J. Y. Rodrigues was Jose Ygnacio Rodrigues, not Juan; and the photograph on page 21 is a picture of Fernando Antonio Pico, the son of the grantee.



Schooner SANTA CRUZ

seen through Arch Rock

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SANTA CRUZ ISLAND FROM 1869 TO 1937

By **Helen Caire**

The Channel Islands form a chain along the coast of California where it swings east from Point Conception to Point Hueneme. Santa Cruz, breaking the sea about twenty-five miles south of Santa Barbara, is the largest and most beautiful of the first four. As an introduction, a summary of its earlier background should perhaps precede its history from 1869 to 1937.

The first inhabitants were the Chumash Indians[1] who called the island *Limu*. They were there when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo[2] discovered the islands in 1542. Sebastian Viscaino,[3] exploring the region in 1602 was the first to note that the four northern islands run parallel with the Californian coast. In 1769 Juan Perez,[4] Captain of the SAN ANTONIO, sailed up the coast. The explorers landed on the island to take on wood and water. Aboard once more, the two Franciscans with the expedition realized they had left behind an iron cross on a staff. When the ship was about to weigh anchor, some Indians came rowing swiftly out in their excellent canoes to return the cross. The island was then named *La Isla de la Santa Cruz*. In 1804 the Franciscan friar Estevan Tapis[5] suggested establishing a mission on the island. The natives refused to leave their island home although the Indians of neighboring Santa Rosa were willing to go to Santa Cruz should a mission be built there. Two years later Fray Tapis wrote that an epidemic of measles unfortunately had decimated the Indians, so the project was abandoned.

Prisoners' Harbor with La Playa at the right

Some years later the Mexican government decided to send convicts to California against the protests of the governor and the Californians.[6] In February 1830 about 180 convicts were sent north on the MARIA ESTER. On their arrival at Santa Barbara, Captain de la Guerra kindly helped them. Only about thirty-one were sent to Santa Cruz Island, the Santa Barbara Mission providing them with necessities. From that incident the main port of the island, lying due south of Santa Barbara, was named Prisoners' Harbor. After several months the prisoners escaped on a raft to the mainland. They were allowed to remain and seem to have become good citizens.

The Chumash had long been removed from the island when the Mexican governor in 1839 granted it to Andres Castillero in reward for services. It is not known if, or how much, he developed the island. Eustace Barron and his associates purchased the island in 1859, title being taken in the name of his nephew William E. Barron.

In 1869 ten San Franciscans, directors of the French savings bank (*Societe Francaise d'Epargnes et de Prevoyance Mutuelle* founded in 1860) filed papers of incorporation to form the Santa Cruz Island Company. Their purpose was to develop the island as a ranch. The directors included Gustave Mahe, Camilo Martin, Thomas J. Gallagher, T. Lemmen Meyer, Adrien Gensoul, Pablo Baca, Nicolas Larco, Alexander Weill, Giovanni Battista Cerruti and Justinian Caire who early was named president. In the course of about twelve years Justinian Caire acquired sole ownership. Long before his death in 1897, he transferred to his beloved wife Albina C.S. Caire entire ownership of the capital stock of the island. For three generations the family continued to use the island as a ranch and cherished vacation home.

Sheep from England and fine merinos from Spain had been imported by the former owners. Purebred Rambouillet merinos were added by the Santa Cruz Island Company. Every year sheep were shipped to market from

Italian field workers in the vineyards

the wharf at Prisoners' Harbor. Shipments were made in the company schooner SANTA CRUZ, constructed by Matthew Turner, master shipbuilder on the west coast. The wool usually went by coastal steamers to San Francisco "for ultimate delivery in Boston or Philadelphia, where its quality was well-known to buyers . . ." On the subject of shearing, my father noted: ". . . a goodly number of men—riders and shearers—were brought from the mainland for a period of forty or fifty days. In early days as many as 40- to 50,000 sheep roamed the Island; later the number was regulated to accord with natural conditions determined by rainfall and feed reserves."[7] Some erosion was due to sheep; but had they devastated the island ecology as has sometimes been alleged, Santa Cruz Island could not now be in such an unusual state of preservation. Indeed, it is one of the best preserved regions in the United States.

Justinian Caire imported Durham cattle. In later years they were crossed with purebred Herefords which forage farther for feed and water than Shorthorns, an important consideration in southern California which is subject to cycles of drought years.

Selected vine stock from France was imported by my grandfather and planted in the foothills of the Canada del Medio where the earth is particularly rich in chemicals needed for the cultivation of vines. The vine stock included Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Barbera, Petite Sirah, Malbec, Cantal, Zinfandel, Muscat Frontignan and Riesling, producing wine widely known and highly regarded for its excellent quality. "The island [Santa Cruz] wine is said to have a peculiar bouquet not to be found on the mainland," wrote the historian Rider.[8] Adams states: "Santa Cruz Island . . . was renowned before Prohibition for the prize-winning wines grown there . . ."[9]

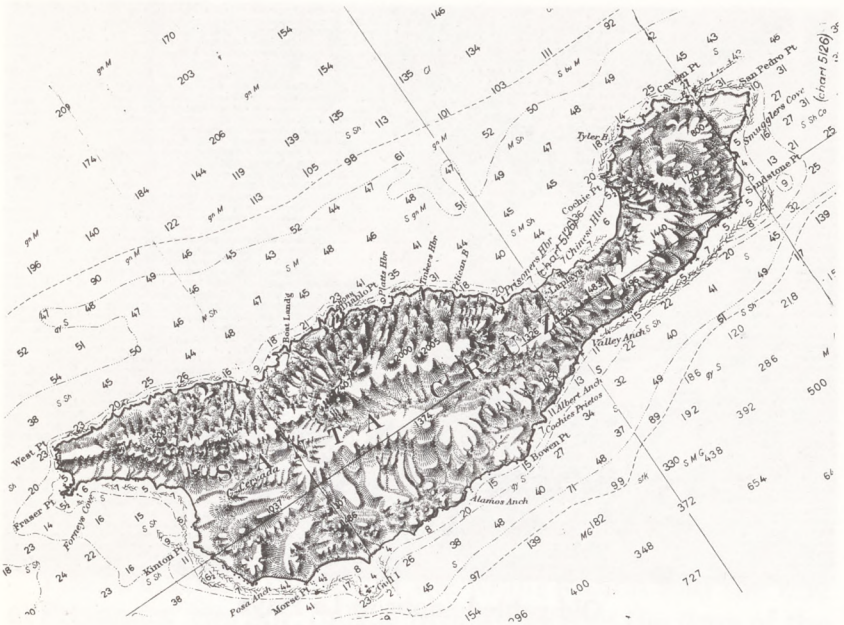
My grandfather infused into his employment policy the right amount of patriarchal spirit, a policy followed suc-

Winery at the left of the Main Ranch buildings

Barrels of wine at the wharf

cessfully by his son Frederic and grandson Justinian II. *Vaqueros* to work cattle and sheep were usually *Barbarenos*. A larger number was recruited in Santa Barbara for the roundups and shearing, and during the vintage season. Most of the field workers and vine dressers were Italian. The experts in charge of the wine cellar were French. Skilled Italian stonemasons shaped the quoins from ground to roof for the adobe houses at the Main Ranch, at *La Playa* (Prisoners' Harbor) and at the west and east end ranches. The centers of the stone quoins of the chapel at the Main Ranch were each carved with a cross. To prevent erosion in vulnerable places, those expert hands built stone walls without cement, which continued to be maintained.

Main Ranch buildings in the Central Valley



1927 topographical map

The masterly layout by Justinian Caire of the Main Ranch in the Canada del Medio (Central Valley) was unique in California. The three-mile road up the Canada del Puerto from Prisoners' Harbor ended in a **T** in front of the gradual rise of the fenced residence enclosure. There the road stretched east and westward, the latter leading into the barnyard. Beyond that great expanse, it continued for eleven miles to Christy Ranch at the west end.

The earliest buildings on the island were mainly of adobe bricks, but bricks were also fired for constructing the walls of the chapel in 1891, the large and small stables, the winery and fermentation cellar at the Main Ranch and the large double warehouse at Prisoners' Harbor in 1887. Kilns to extract lime to mix with mortar for cementing the bricks in building stood long after needed: one at the Main Ranch; the other not far from Prisoners' Harbor, opposite a eucalyptus grove.

Old gabled adobe at La Playa

Remodeled building in Mediterranean style

Colorados in the background

The two adobe houses at the Main Ranch and the one at Prisoners' Harbor, dating probably from the time of the Barrons, were remodeled by Justinian Caire in charming Mediterranean style. The front terraces of each faced square gardens. Balconies, outside staircases leading to the second storeys, terraces and garden fences were railed with wrought iron fashioned in the island smithy. One of the houses at the Main Ranch in the enclosure unfortunately became unsafe and was razed to be replaced by a large U-shaped frame house. One of the oldest buildings, the residence dining room and kitchen remained a separate building when remodeled. A long porch running its length ended in a short staircase leading to one ell **(L)** of the house.

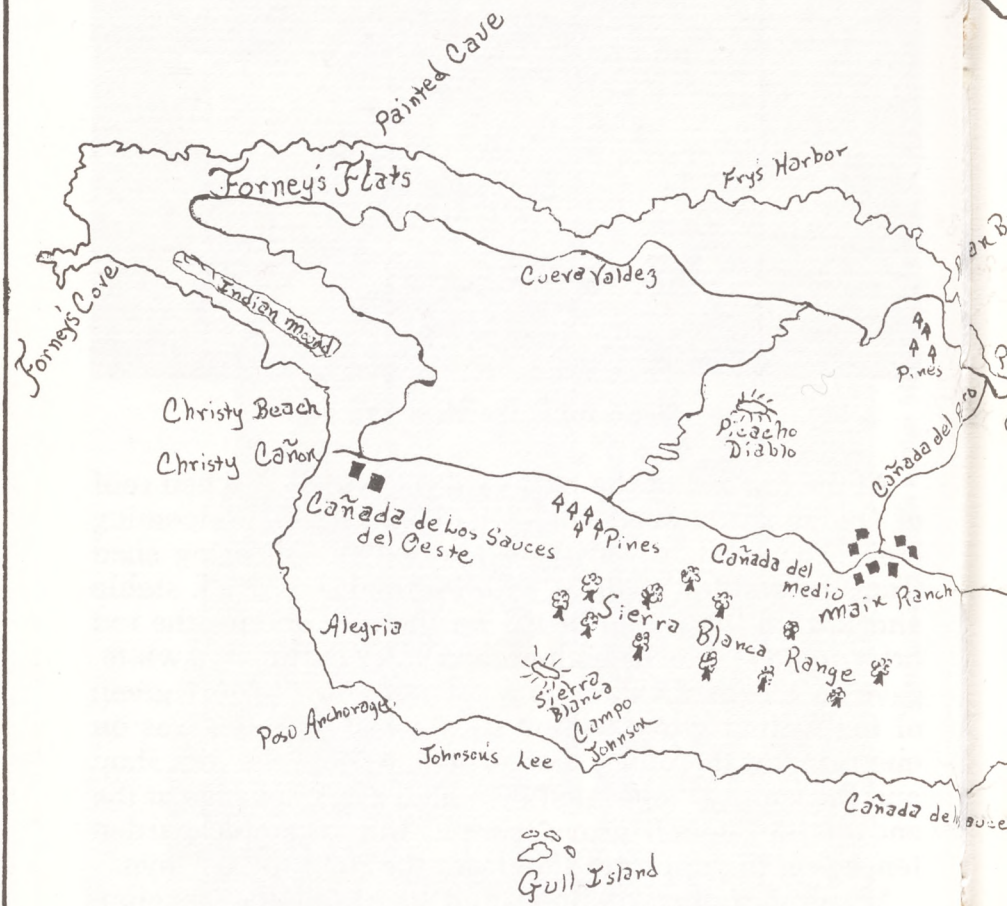
Beyond the enclosure stood the office with the men's kitchen and mess hall some distance behind it. Sloping gently westward spread the barnyard, larger than a football field. On the southern side were two bunkhouses and corrals. The Colorados, the red range of the southern boundary of the Canada del Medio, is covered with dense chaparral.

Houses and barns at the Main Ranch

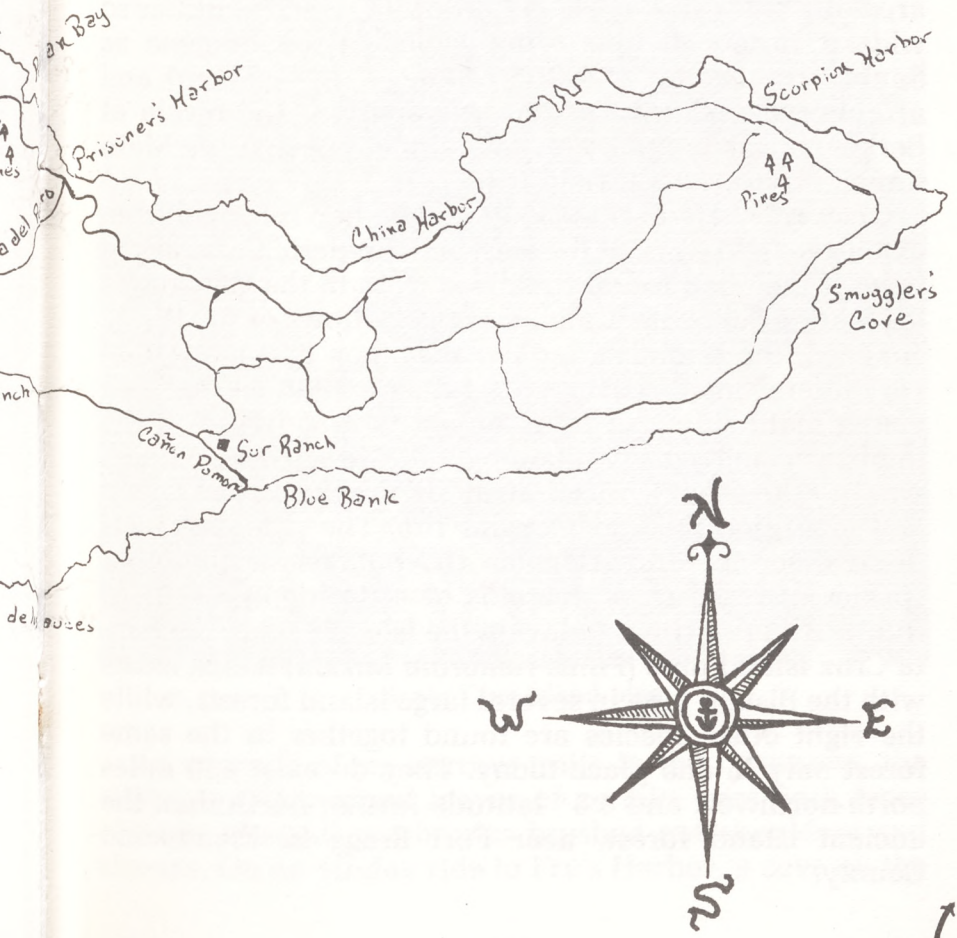
Barnyard at the Main Ranch

At the far end of the barnyard the widely pitched roof of the shearing shed corral had an ample, welcoming look. The road to Christy separated the shearing shed from the stallion's corral with its small red brick stable and loft. In the center of the northern boundary the red brick main stable, its high-arched entry outlined in white, gave an accent of character and color with the dark green of the walnut grove behind it. The saddle room was on one side; on the other, the carpenter shop, the tool shop and the smithy. Separated by a high cypress hedge at the end of the walnut grove, spread the vegetable garden fenced on the opposite side from the road to *La Playa.*

My grandfather planned and executed the development of the island in diversified ranching: sheep, cattle and viticulture; operations continued by his descendants. At no time did he contemplate establishing a colony there. The family at frequent and long visits, and the employees were the main residents. Pelican Bay, one of


Painted Cave
Forney's Flats
Frys Harbor
Forney's Cove
Indian Mound
Cuevo Valdez
Pines
Christy Beach
Christy Cañon
Picacho Diablo
Cañada del Oro
Cañada de Los Sauces
del Oeste
Pines
Cañada del medio
Maix Ranch
Alegria
Sierra Blanca Range
Sierra Blanca
Campo Johnson
Pass Anchorage
Johnsons Lee
Cañada de
Gull Island

Santa Cruz Island



the coves on the northern coast, was leased to Captain Ira Eaton as a camp where he brought visitors. So many yachtsmen and others wished to visit the island that this was deemed the best way to resolve the problem and to preserve the beauty and ecology of the many accessible canyons. Permits were also given to responsible persons who requested them.

From earliest times the Caire family was interested in the ecology and history of the island. Scientists were always welcomed. William W. Rand, who made extensive geological studies at the island, wrote: "Probably no area of similar size exists in California which contains so wide a variety of interesting geological phenomena as Santa Cruz Island."[10] Ralph Chaney,[11] the eminent and affable paleobotanist of the University of California at Berkeley, was often a welcome dinner guest at the Main Ranch on his several field trips.

Once when Herbert Mason[12] and he had returned from extensive field work at the west end, Frederic Caire asked them if they had found fossilized trees in the Canada de los Sauces del Oeste (Canyon of the Willows of the West). Amazed, the scientists replied that they had made that very interesting discovery. My father explained that as a young man, riding in that canyon with a friend in the lumber business, he had pointed out strange trees embedded in a high bank sliced away by the creek. His friend had identified them as Douglas firs. The paleobotanists discovered not only Douglas fir, but also eight other species of fossil trees, remains of a decidedly northern forest. All are extinct today on the island except the Santa Cruz Island pine *(Pinus remorata Mason)* which exists with the Bishop pine in several large island forests, while the eight other species are found together in the same forest only in one place today. They do exist 450 miles north-northwest and 5.5° latitude further north than the ancient island forest, near Fort Bragg in Mendocino County.

Santa Cruz Island pine

As we rode along narrow trails in the chaparral, the slightly prickly-edged leaves of certain trees with loose clusters of small red berries brushed our shoulders and sleeves. On an all-day ride to Fry's Harbor, a cove on the

Ironwood

leaves

Maunsell

Van

Rensselaer

northern coast, we left our horses near the beach, as usual, and hiked up the canyon. Part way up we met Maunsell Van Rensselaer, then Assistant Director of the Blaksley Botanic Garden, now the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. He and his party, on a botanizing expedition, were resting near the creek. On both sides tall Woodwardias and other lacy ferns flourished luxuriously. Red and orange mimulus covered a high bank on one side of the canyon. We paused, too, in our upward climb to enjoy the cool beauty, shaded by branches of huge oaks. We shed our boots and socks; and rolling up our jeans, we let our feet dangle in a pool while we chatted. "What do you call the tree with the bright red berry?" Mr. Van Rensselaer asked. "We call it the mid-summer Christmas berry." He added that they were trying to find a common name for it. "We call it summer holly," I told him. We all laughed, amused at the lengthy name the botanical scholars had suggested, which was of course more accurate for the tree is not a holly. Mr. Van Rensselaer nodded in approval that both names had the same basic idea. I never followed up on what they had decided to christen the tree, but I have heard that it is called summer holly.

Ironwood in flower

A tree now found only on Santa Cruz, Santa Catalina, San Clemente and Santa Rosa Islands is a species of ironwood *(Lyonothamnus floribundus asplenifolius).* At the island it was called *palo fierro.* It has dark green, fern-like leaves and in summer is covered with tiny white flowers. Years ago Van Rensselaer asked my father if it would be possible for seeds of the *palo fierro* to be gathered at the island. Of course, my father acquiesed. My sisters and two cousins who were at the island that fall volunteered to be the 'Palo Fierro Mounties.' They set out several times with huge white bags sent over by Van Rensselaer to ride down the southern slopes of the Colorados where, in sheltered pockets of the ridge, clumps of the trees flourished. They gathered whole flower clusters now gone to minute seed, sometimes standing on their saddles to reach higher branches. The four girls returned to the Main Ranch with the enormous bags tied to the saddle horns, bulging with future potential island ironwood trees for the Santa Barbara mainland. It was officially designated the Santa Barbara County tree.

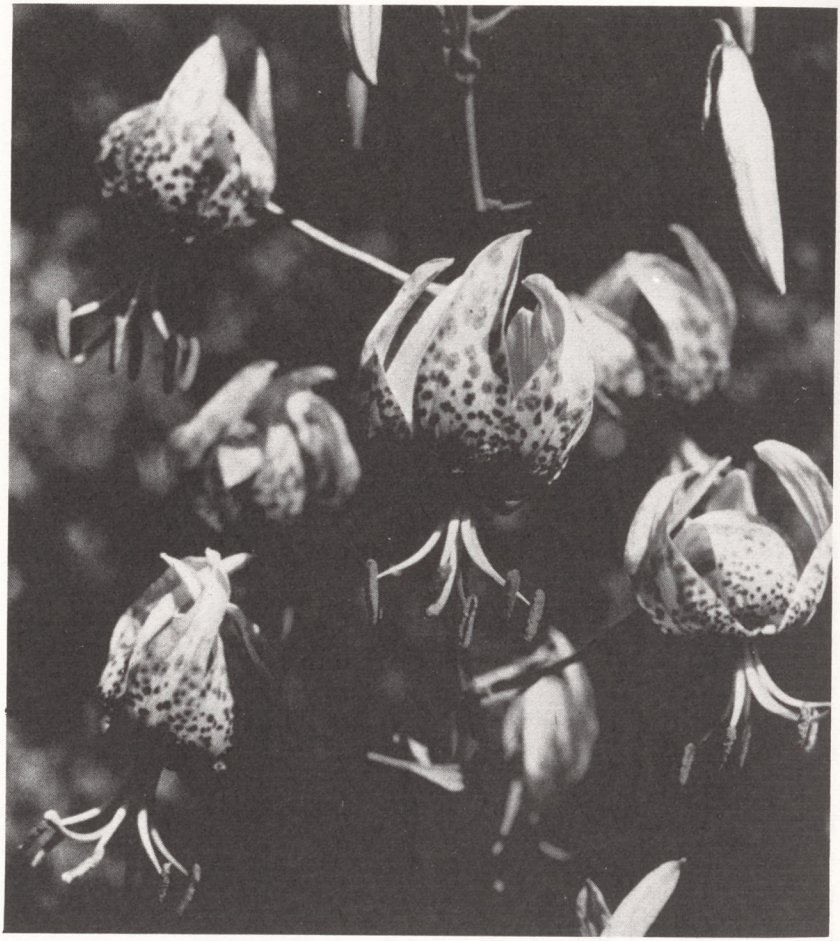
Windbreak of Eucalyptus at the Main Ranch

While preserving the native flora, the family introduced many trees for beauty or use. My grandfather imported eucalyptus, blue gums with stately marbled columns and newcomers to California at the time, for use as windbreaks and wharf piles. The great interest of his eldest daughter Delphine, when at the island, was the cultivation of young trees. Monterey pines were planted along the shore at Prisoners' Harbor to hold down the sand behind the rocky beach. Monterey cypresses made windbreaks at windblown Christy at the west end of the island. Some other trees introduced in the course of years were Italian stone pines, pepper trees, acacias, oleanders and locusts in addition to English walnuts, almonds, peaches, apricots, figs, oranges and lemons.

A tree we loved especially was The Pine. Planted by my grandmother from a seed in the residence enclosure, it grew to a tremendous height and spread. The bench of laths built around it was enlarged periodically as the huge trunk expanded. On summer evenings it was a fine place to sit and chat and sing, always ending with the old French song, *"Bon soir, mes amis, bon soir . . .",* which our friends, too, liked to learn.

Of course many garden flowers were introduced. My grandfather had gardens made in front of the charming adobe houses at the Main Ranch and at *La Playa,* especially planted to roses. The bushes at Prisoners' Harbor in summertime grew almost as high as the wrought iron balcony across the second storey, old French roses which gave generous bouquets in spring and fall. Castilian roses were brought to the island so long ago we did not know when they had first been introduced.

The Popular song index lists a "Bonsoir, mes amis, bonsoir" in Alan Mills' Favorite French folk songs: 65 traditional songs of France and Canada.



Tiger lily *(Lilium Humboldtii)*

The island birds and wildflowers are too numerous to list here. I will mention only a certain place on the edge of the chaparral, a short distance off the road to Sur, where each summer we had to dismount and investigate again what we called 'the tiger lily forest'. The plants with many purple-spotted orange flowers reached almost to the top of the scrub oaks. One spring we discovered delicate fairy lanterns growing nearby.

Vaqueros barbecuing carne asada

As to our island days, they were as near to paradise as one can come this side of eternity. When we were children, there were days of wading in and exploring the wonders of the creek of the Canada del Medio or in the waves at *La Playa* and sailing the boats we had made in the carpenter and blacksmith shops at the Main Ranch, and making elaborate 'parks' in the sand above the rocky shore.

There were picnics and barbecues at Prisoners' Harbor, at the *Cascada* some two miles from the Main Ranch on the road to Christy, or at the Sur about the same distance eastward. At the *Cascada* we always waded to investigate the crow's nest in a dry basin above the deep pool in the rock wall bounding the high waterfall. There were barbecues under huge oaks at the Sur near the Canada Pomona creek at a place where the *vaqueros* took their lunch break during the roundups.

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cascada: Sp.; cascade.
crow's nest: naut.; an enclosed high platform for a lookout.
sur: Sp.; south.

Wharf at Prisoners' Harbor

My father, wearing a linen duster, drove the team of the charabanc which easily accommodated at least nine people. The buggy (formerly my grandparents' city rockaway carriage, finally minus its top but otherwise in good condition) and a cart or two (misnomered the sulkies) followed, depending on the number of picnickers. Later, of course, we rode while our elders took the Model-T Ford, and then a Dodge.

We must ride over the broad fields of the Sur, tying our horses to the last fence, to follow the steep trail down over dusty, glistening Indian-mound soil to reach the mouth of Pomona Creek where it flows to the sand of the long strand of Valley Anchorage. We had to cross the creek to enter the 'tunnel' which pierces a sea-washed slope. Inside, we picked our way in the semi-obscurity from rock to rock, bending our heads to avoid overhangs in the 'ceiling.' Above, below, on all sides the 'tunnel' is a narrow stretch of amethyst, lees of grapes and porphyry: another world. At the end we emerged on a shelf of volcanic rock. Here it was always somewhat exciting, for we must watch the tide. At high tide this farther entrance to the 'tunnel' was flooded by wildly crashing waves.

On 'schooner day' we would ride down to Prisoners' Harbor for a swim, sit on the beach sunning ourselves and chat. When the SANTA CRUZ arrived, we would go down to the end of the wharf to get the mail pouch from the captain. After reading letters and exchanging news, we would slip the envelopes down the leg of our boots for the ride home.

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charabanc: Fr., char a bancs; a long vehicle with seats facing front.
sulky: a light, two-wheeled carriage for a single person.
amethyst: purple crystalized quartz.
lees of grapes: formation of calcium carbonate that occurs on the walls of caves in grapelike cluster.
porphyry: igneous rock of feldspar crystals.

Painted Cave

Remembering our island days makes summarizing material difficult. We were out-of-doors all day: riding, boating, swimming, gardening. There were cruises to the Painted Cave in the SANTA CRUZ or with yachting friends: an eerie other world where light shafting through the high entrance showed all shades of amethyst and emerald; and tawny tones extinguished to Stygian darkness as one penetrated into the caverns. Seals leapt off ledges with echoing barks as they swam out into the sea-world of light.

Middle arch at Tres Bocas

Wild hog hunting was a good sport for the animals damaged fields and vineyards. Sometimes on long rides we would take picnic lunches in the saddle bags but no meat on the chance of getting a young wild hog to barbecue. We were never disappointed.

Many of our days were spent in the saddle, riding in a cavalcade of from four or five to eleven or twelve, over the trails to canyons of the southern or northern coasts down to their coves. It was a very long ride to Cueva Valdez, called *Tres Bocas* in early days because of its three 'mouths' (high entrances) one to the shore and two to the sea. The trail led down to a high mesa above the eastern side of the cove. Near the end of the headland, an old *vaquero* pointed out a large cactus patch with the best tunas on the island where we must always dismount to skin the prickly, thick outer-layer carefully and eat the refreshing fruit.

Westward beyond the great inland pine forest, we sometimes left the road to Christy to ride down the Canada de los Sauces where sweet clover reached up to our stirrups in spring and summer. Far down the canyon, sitting in the creekbed near the entombed ancient forests, we used to wonder how the island was in those prehistoric days. Did mammoths wander here? Our wonderings about the ancient past increased as we researched early island history. Cabrillo died on one of these Channel Islands and his grave has never been found. We used to hope that it was on Santa Cruz. However, after consulting the best sources, we reluctantly had to admit that the lost grave must be on San Miguel Island. . . . Where would the mission have been established: at Prisoners' Harbor; in the Canada del Medio where there were no Chumash villages for they must always be near the life-giving sea. We agreed with Professor Herbert E. Bolton's tracing of Cabrillo's journey around the Channel Islands rather than that of other sources . . . Smugglers, sea otter hunters: ample scope for wonderings.

Besides the *rancherias* there were other reminders of the island Indians. One day having crossed the rugged and difficult trail over Sierra Blanca, the white range which rams itself in to the Colorados almost in the mid-southern coast, we rode down to the long sandy beach of Johnson's Lee. Later, high above the strand we came upon a stone mortar in which centuries ago a Chumash housewife had ground acorn, islay or other seeds. Though it was large and heavy, the boys took turns carrying it, resting it on their saddles near the horn all the miles to the Main Ranch.

Christmas at the island! We had long dreamed of it and one winter it came true. A full Bishop pine from the great pine forest, beginning in the hills behind *La Playa* and stretching far westward, was placed in front of the largest living room window. It soon was decorated with colored oak tree 'balls,' gilded garlands of eucalyptus 'bells' and

Altar in the chapel

strings of popcorn, which had jumped to white fluffiness in the wire popper over coals in the living room fireplace. The Rev. Thomas Sherman, the son of General William Tecumseh Sherman of the War Between the States, was our visitor. He celebrated three Christmas masses in the chapel, the bell in the little belfry ringing its particularly sweet sound over the vineyards and fields and buildings in the Canada del Medio. We feasted later on fat wild geese brought to the Main Ranch from the fields at Christy. It was gala.

Surrounding hills and canyons

Our outdoor life at the island made urban living seem like another world when we returned to the city. There on those sweet sea-encircled hills and *canadas,* all that counted was what you were as a person, as a human being. It was a good world.

In 1925 the island was partitioned: 54,000 acres continued to be operated by the Santa Cruz Island Company as a single ranch, held by Mrs. Justinian Caire until her death and four of her children (Delphine, Arthur, Frederic and Helene A. Caire); the 6,000 acres at the east end being operated as a separate sheep ranch. In 1937 the Santa Cruz Island Company sold its holdings to Evelyn and Edwin L. Stanton of Los Angeles. Their son Carey Stanton holds ownership of the Santa Cruz Island Company land except for 15,000 acres which he sold to the Nature Conservancy.

The island is a lovely place. Let those who go there step lightly, touch gently.

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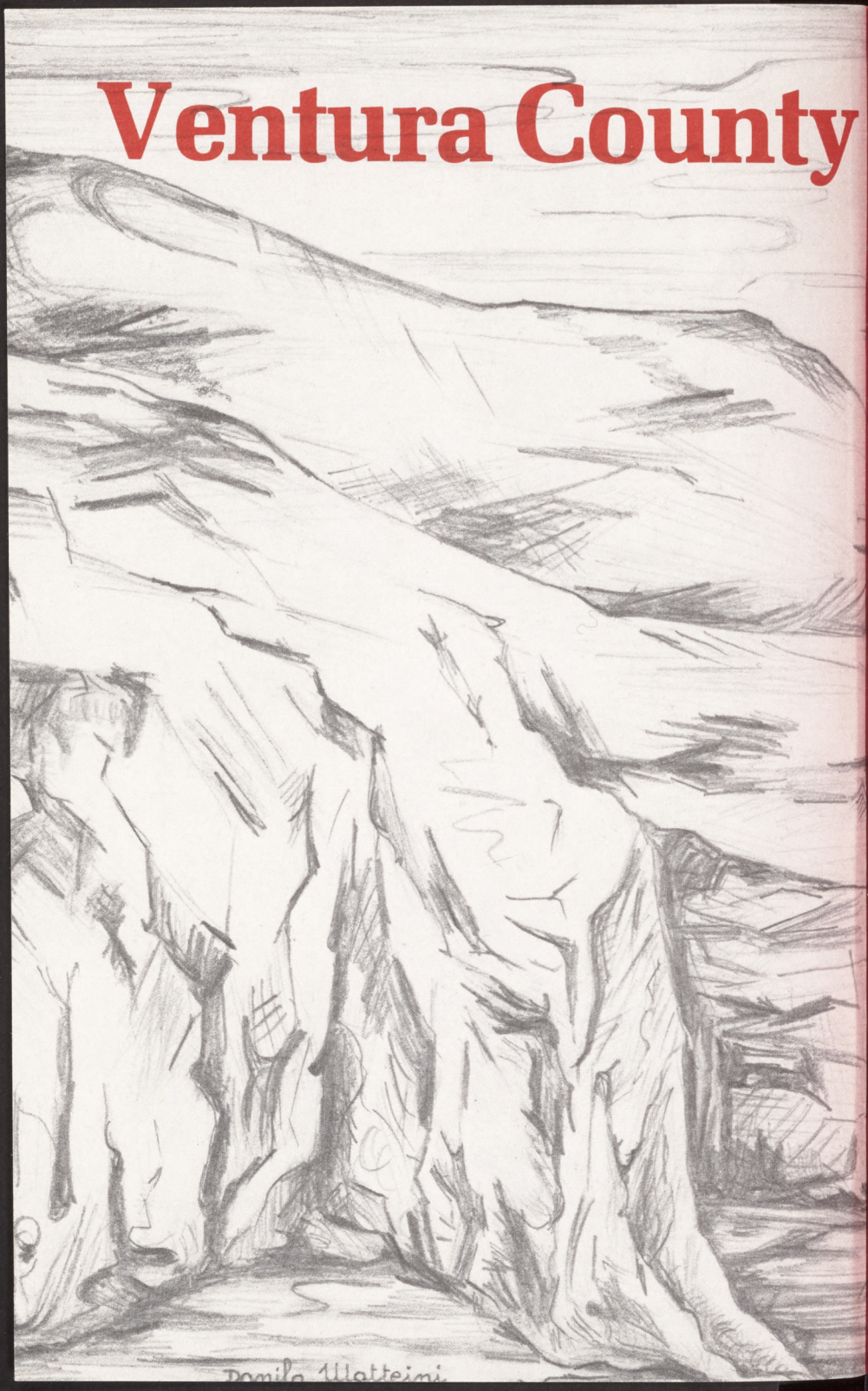
Ventura County



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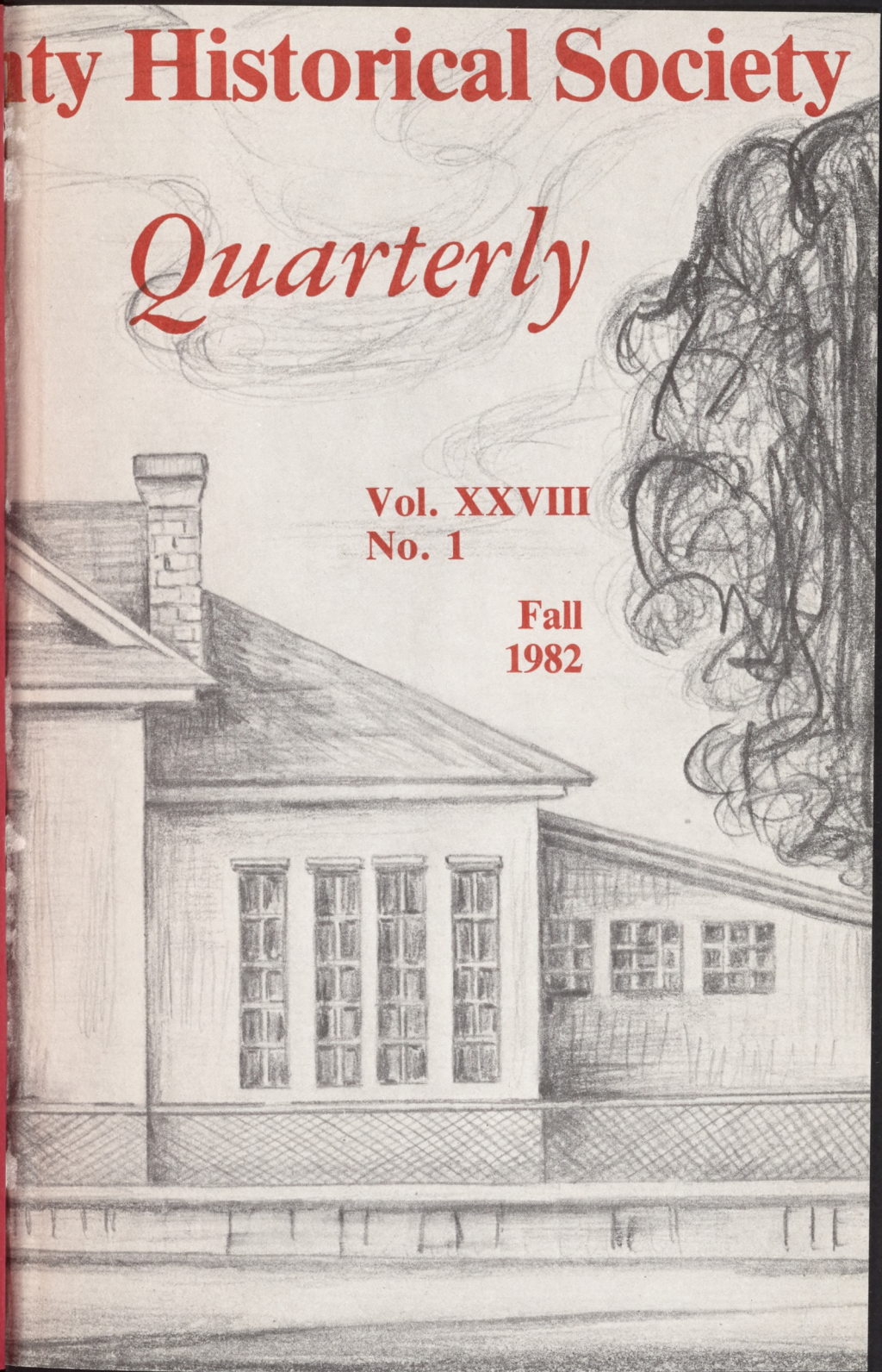

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Ventura County Historical Society

Quarterly

Grant W. Heil, Editor

Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 Fall 1982

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BOOKPLATE

ONE OLD HOUSE
By Jeanne M. Brown

THE BOOM OF '87
By John Montgomery

OJAI VALLEY

Notice

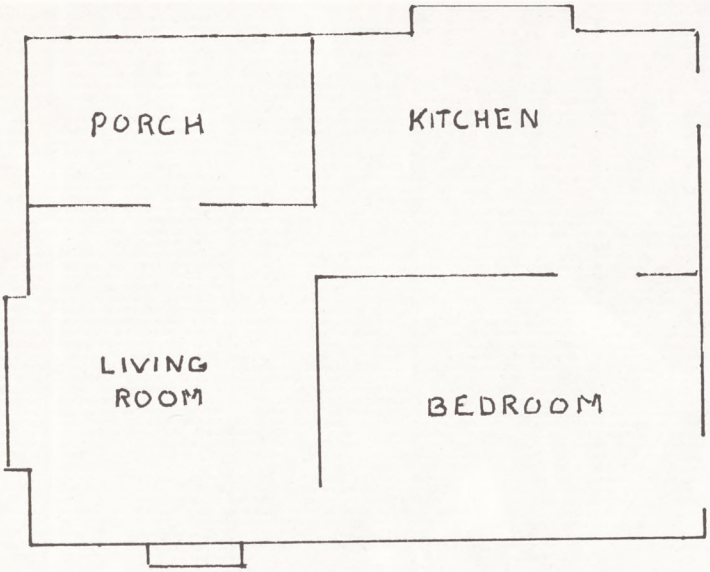
The first notice of the Boom of the Eighties to Ventura County was the two-column advertisement of Hunt & Walden on December 31, 1886. Although the Obiols Tract was subdivided in 1876, the research of Mrs. Brown indicates her house was not built until 1886. Montgomery's survey of the boom includes a speculator's view of The Ojai.

Danilo Matteini drew the cover and the mailer, and Tom Roe photographed the residence. The two engravings are reproduced from *Thompson & West.*

The printing of this issue was financed by

The R. Leonard and Jenne T. Stump Library Fund

Mrs. Stump did not outlive her husband more than five years. One of their bequests was a fund to publish and purchase books.



One Old House

***By* Jeanne[1] M. Brown**

This single-story, wood-frame cottage with a multi-gable roof was constructed as a three-room residence. The living room, bedroom and kitchen comprise a total of 840 square feet. The L-shape enclosed a small front porch, and a twelve- by twenty-five-foot addition became permanent.

The structure was built upon wood foundation plates resting directly on the ground. Eight-inch redwood, shiplap[2] siding covers the exterior. The interior walls, also redwood, are six inches wide by one fourth inch thick and are laid horizontally. Since they were quite thin, there was not a firm base for wall papering. So the original builders tacked on cheesecloth and wet it, causing the cloth to shrink and tighten the wood.[3]

1. Although she has always called herself *Jeanne,* Mrs. Brown only recently learned from her mother that her name was Janet.

2. Shiplap has a diagonal portion of both edges cut away but on opposite sides so as to make a flush joint with similar pieces.

3. David and Mrs. Brown found pieces of cheesecloth everywhere.

The original unit enclosed a front porch.

There are two bays, one in the living room and one in the bedroom, with three windows each. It would appear that the windows originally should have been of the same height as the bays. But photographs in the late thirties show them only half that size, and construction does not disclose any reason to believe one way or the other. Twelve- by four-inch vents, a foot below the ceiling in each room, opened directly to the outside. The brick fireplace in the living room, with a flush hearth and a simple redwood mantle, was the only source of heat except for the kitchen stove.

The house is situated on a triangular plot of about 8,750 square feet known as Lot 26 of the Obiols Tract, Rancho Ex-Mission San Buenaventura. The subdivision provided neither ingress or egress to property on the east side of the tract. Access was over adjacent lots; and then only by foot or horse as there were no roads, and the terrain was too steep for carriages. Cedar Street would be partially cut through in 1929, and extended about 1947. The contemporary map runs West Main east of Canada Street, now know as Ventura Avenue; and Wall Street is called Obiols Alley.

Gaspar Orena bought all but four lots in 1878 from Ysidro Obiols, and in 1884 paid $10.00 tax on each lot. The fact there were still vacant lots would indicate nothing had been built up to that time. In 1885 Encarnacion de la Riva bought Lot 26, and in May 1886 sold both 25 and 26 for $275.00; she signed the deed with an X. There were three more owners by 1892; and at this time the Sanborn Map[4] shows the addition on the east side of the building. The house was undoubtedly some years old then. Charles L. Cooper had sold Lot 26 in October 1886 for $750.00 to T.H. Morrison who paid taxes in 1887 for land valued at $250.00 and on improvements of $750.00.

Nothing of a personal nature is known of the following owners until 1929 when Frank White bought the place and lived there until he died in 1949. Mr. White was a horticulturist, and developed new strains of many common flowers such as canna and gladioli. He is also responsible for planting the three large Haas avocados and the Auraucaria tree in the front yard, which despite being topped is now thirty-five

4. Sanborn Maps show the outline of the houses *in situs*.

The new roof extends over the addition.

feet tall. The house and grounds were then neglected for a period of twenty years. In June of 1978 we bought the house and then spent an amount equal to the purchase price on repairs. The "we" I refer to are my son David and myself.

Repairs included getting the house on a foundation first: we did it with the help of Jim Johnson and his capable sons; David and I leveled the house with a hydraulic jack and put in the uprights and piers. At the same time, a new garage and driveway were being built after the old barn and lean-to kitchen had been torn down. Four tons of debris were hauled away. When the porch was incorporated into the living room, we simulated two-inch tongue-and-groove with exterior plywood especially made since that size is no longer available. The architectural details at each corner of the roof are from an old house now demolished.

The old chimney and fireplace came down next. Here you start at the top and work your way down much easier than doing it the approved method of "starting at the bottom and working your way up" to success. The fireplace and flue were

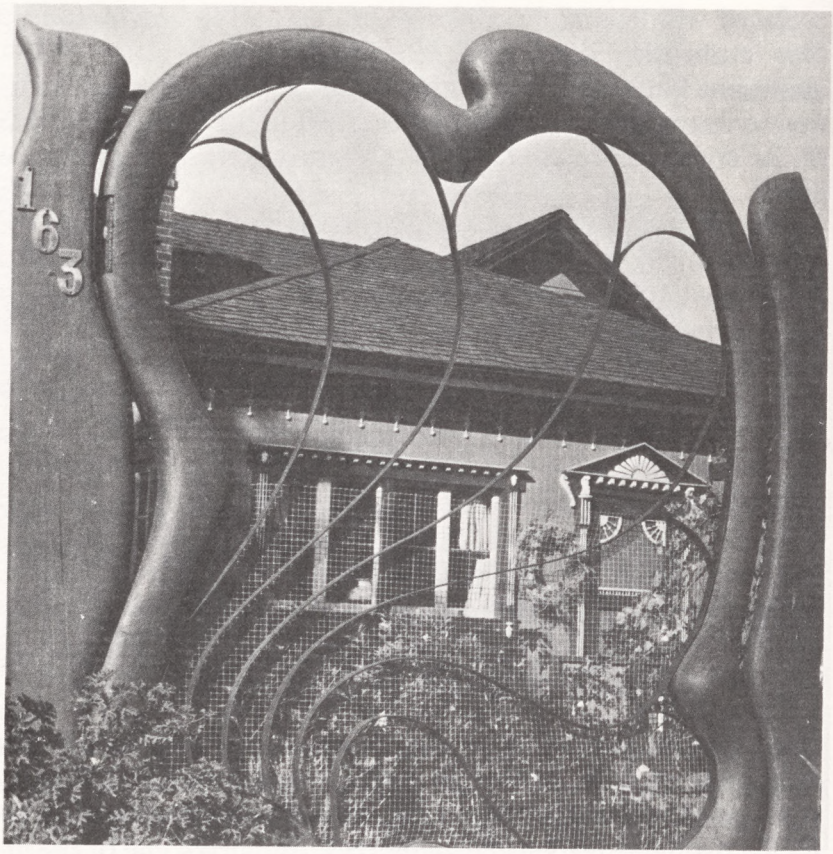
replaced with a prefabricated set-up, and a tile hearth added. Not 'authentic', but I offer no apologies; it is efficient and about one half the cost of a masonry one. It was not our intention to restore this house but to rebuild it in the style of the time of its construction, and make a comfortable and attractive home.

The old floors were in such poor shape they could not be refinished. Six-inch pine boards were laid on top; redwood would have been appropriate but was too costly. In the kitchen we laid two- by two-foot particle-board blocks stained light oak with three-inch dark walnut strips between.

After the rafters were replaced in the ceiling, a new roof of olive composition shingles that look remarkably like wood and are fire retardant was installed. All interior walls were covered with gypsum wall board and then papered in old fashioned designs. A six-inch moulding was added to the ceiling in the bedrooms adapted from the Winchester House in San Jose. A decorative frieze in the living room seemed appropriate. We cast part of the design in plaster, the rest was done directly to the walls with a dry-wall compound.

The old bathroom was so termite damaged, it had to be torn down and replaced with a twelve- by sixteen-foot room by a contractor. It is one-half bath and one-half dressing room; this was essential as there are no closets in the bedrooms. We installed two large leaded glass windows, shingled some of the interior walls and added an antique bureau with the wash basin sunk in it. We kept the old claw foot tub and added a stall shower. Old lighting fixtures and brass plumbing fixtures and other touches give this room an old, light-hearted look.

New old-looking kitchen cabinets were installed in the north end of the all-purpose room added sometime before. They were stained dark and porcelain knobs employed. A deep red-brown tile was used for the counter there. Beams and a wide moulding were added to the ceiling and a design stenciled along the sides of each. The front door is oversize and mahogany with a small leaded-glass window designed and executed by my son as was all the other leaded glass in the house. A fake window, lace curtains included, hides old pipes outside the kitchen that could not be put inside the walls since it is a single-walled structure.

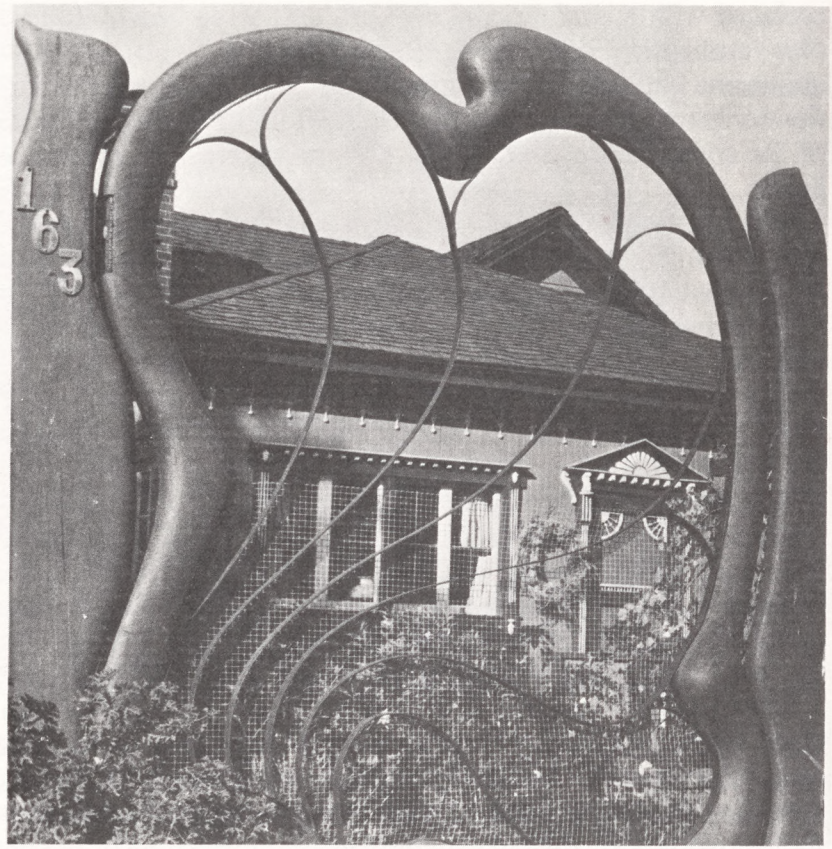


The house now faces east.

The outside of the house was trimmed in an ornate Victorian style, and painted a mustard-green with red and fawn beige trim. Bricks from the old fireplace were used to make a patio floor under the Auraucaria tree, and planting was started. I have tried to have a casual, old-fashioned garden (if there is such a thing) with native rocks and common flowers and shrubs. A decorative fence and gate, in the Art Nouveau style designed by George Waller, were added at an earlier date.

We have saved all the old square nails from wood that had to be replaced, and now have several pounds of them; also kept all the old pottery and pieces of glass discovered in the yard. I recently found a Chumash Indian scraper; so though the house is old, the site is older.

Glenlake Ave
Canada St.
School Lot
Police
Yates Alley
West Main St.
East Main St.
Spencer St.
Ferguson St.



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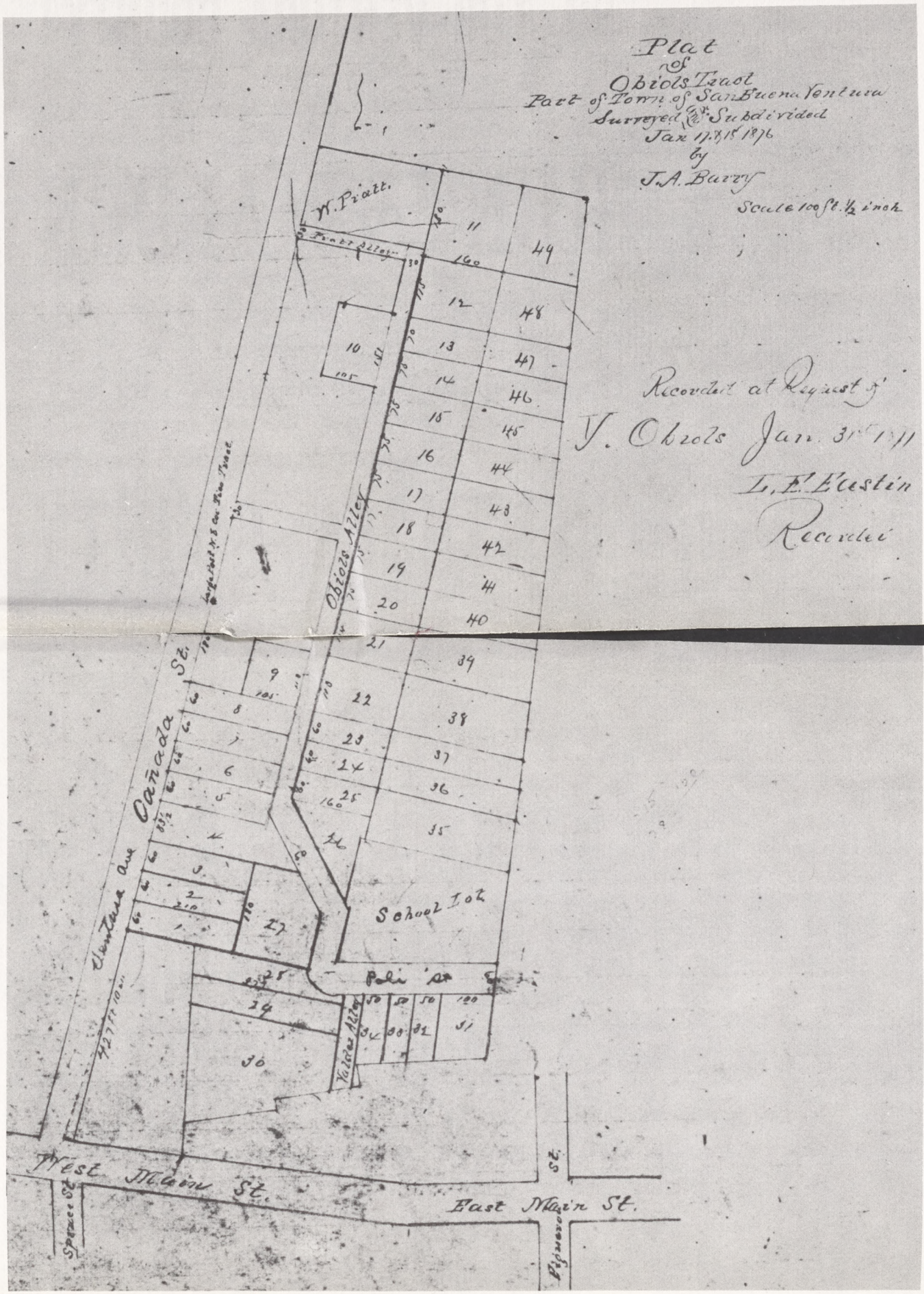
Plat
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W. Platt.
Platt Alley
Obiols Alley
Ventura Ave
Canada St.
School Lot
Palm St.
Valerio Alley
West Main St.
East Main St.
Spruce St.
Figueroa St.

Notice for Publication of Time Appointed for Proving Will, Etc.

In the Superior Court, of the County of Ventura, State of California.

In the matter of the Estate of Lorinda Todd, deceased.

PURSUANT TO AN ORDER OF SAID Court, made on the 25th day of April 1887, notice is bereby given, that Saturday the 7th day of May 1887, at 10 o'clock, a. m. of said day, at the Court room of said Court at the Court house in the said County of Ventura has been appointed as the time and place for proving the Will of said Lorinda Todd deceased, and for hearing the application of Theodore Todd for the issuance to him of letters testamentary when and where any person interested may appear and contest the same.

Dated April 25th, 1887.

[SEAL] L. F. EASTIN, Clerk.

HALL & HAMER, Att'ys for Petitioner.

The Theodore Todds were in the Upper Ojai.

AGENTS WANTED to sell "reminiscences" of 60 years in the national metropolis by

Ben Perley Poore

Illustrating the Wit, Humor, and Eccentricities of noted celebrities. A richly illustrated treat of inner society history, from "ye olden time" to the wedding of Cleve- [illegible] Wonderfully popular. Agents report terms, **A. L. BANCROFT & CO.**, Publishers, San Francisco, Cal. 577-d&w6t

The Bancrofts vacationed in The Ojai.

FOR SALE
In the Ojai Valley.

A farm of 50 acres good land with house barn and a fine well of water price $2500. Easy terms.

ALSO

A farm of 50 acres, one mile from Nordoff, with 1800 assorted fruit trees in bearing, and 200 grape vines 7 years old with a comfortable house add barn, corrals, sheds, ec., and a fine well of water, price $5,000, easy terms. A very pleasant location, capable of making one of the most beautiful homes in the Ojai.

A house and barn with good well of water and a half block of land fenced, the choisest location in Nordoff, price $1,200.

A house and barn with a good well of water centrally located in the village of Nordoff rice $1,600.

Call on or address,
THOMAS BARROWS,
Nordoff Cal.

HO, FOR VENTURA COUNTY!

"IT IS A GOODLY SIGHT TO SEE WHAT HEAVEN HAS DONE FOR THIS DELICIOUS LAND."

HUNT & WALDEN

REAL ESTATE AGENTS,

Proclaim the Glad Tiding: That by February 1887, San Buenaventura, County Seat of

VENTURA COUNTY

Will be Connected by Rail with LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO and the EAST.

We assert without exaggeration or fear of contradiction that Ventura County offers

THE BEST OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE

—FOR—

Profitable Investments

A BOOM COMING.

NOW IS THE TIME TO INVESTIGATE.

—CALL ON—

HUNT & WALDEN,

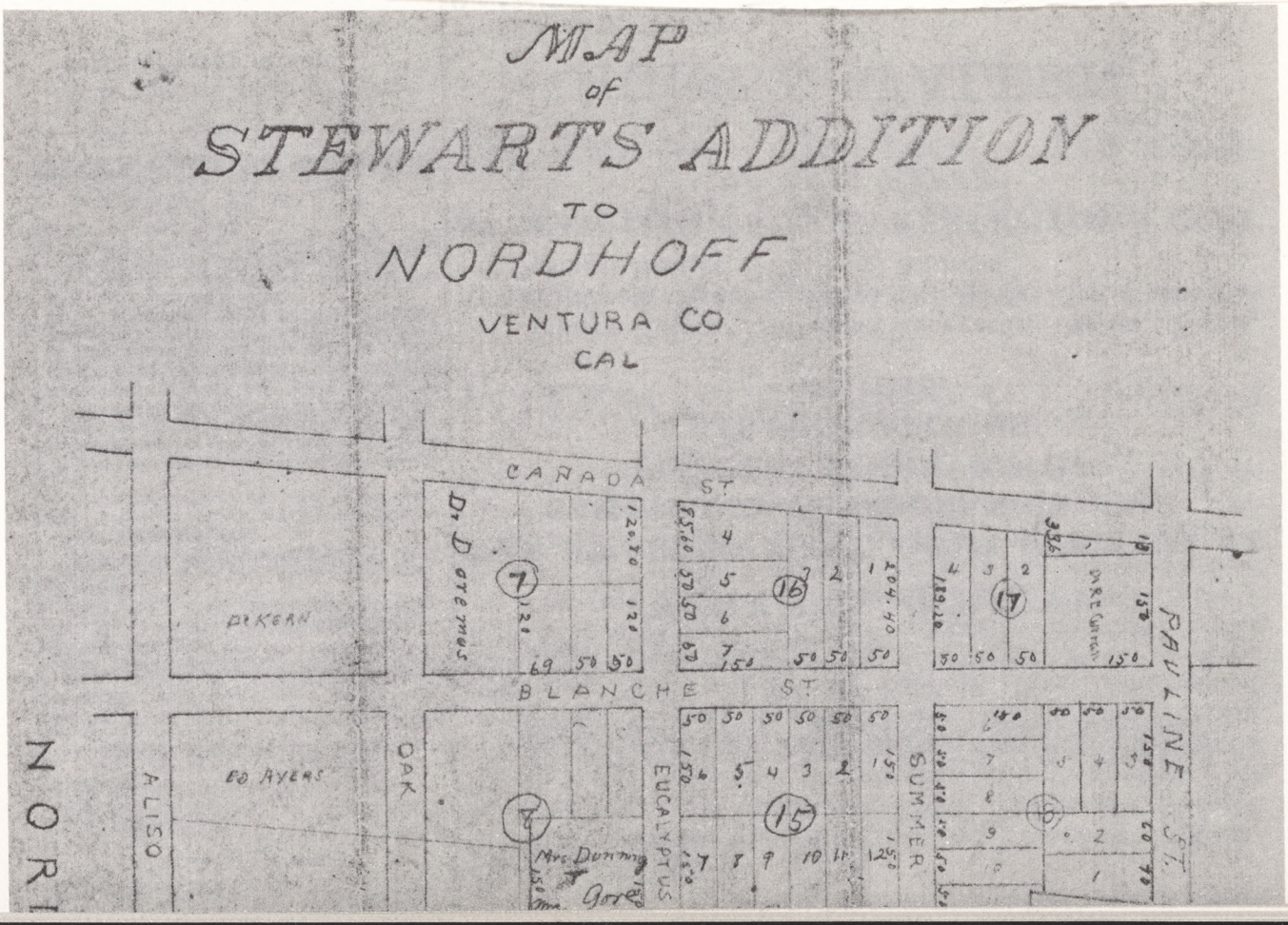
WHO WILL BE PLEASED TO ASSIST IN SECURING

BEAUTIFUL HOMES

—IN A—

IN SECURING

—IN A—



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FOR SALE
In the Ojai Valley.

A farm of 50 acres good land with house barn and a fine well of water price $2560. Easy terms.

ALSO

A farm of 50 acres, one mile from Nordoff, with 1800 assorted fruit trees in bearing, and 200 grape vines 7 years old with a comfortable house add barn, corrals, sheds, ec., and a fine well of water, price $5,000, easy terms. A very pleasant location, capable of making one of the most beautiful homes in the Ojai.

A house and barn with good well of water and a half block of land fenced, the choisest location in Nordoff, price $1,200.

A house and barn with a good well of water centrally located in the village of Nordoff rice $1,600.

Call on or address,
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WHO WILL BE PLEASED TO ASSIST IN SECURING

BEAUTIFUL HOMES

—IN A—

to announce the boom

to announce the boom

FOR SALE
In the Ojai Valley.

A farm of 50 acres good land with house barn and a fine well of water price $2500. Easy terms.

ALSO

A farm of 50 acres, one mile from Nordoff, with 1000 assorted fruit trees in bearing, and 200 grape vines 7 years old with a comfortable house add barn, corrals, sheds, ec., and a fine well of water, price $5,000, easy terms. A very pleasant location, capable of making one of the most beautiful homes in the Ojai.

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A house and barn with a good well of water centrally located in the village of Nordoff rice $1,600.

A farm of about 70 acres, house barn etc., spring of water and some creek bottom lands, will raise corn or alfalfa, price $3,500.

Call on or address,
THOMAS BARROWS,
Nordoff Cal.

Thomas Barrows changed his advertisements.

Ojai Valley House

:o:

Having purchased and refitted the Ojai Valley House, at Nordhoff, we are prepared to give

Good Meals and Beds

At living rates. All are invited to give us acall.

☞Livery stable in connection with the house saddle horses and carriage teams to lot. Horses ffroomed with Special care. Charges moderate.

C. ARNOLD & SON.

Names of hotels changed as fast as managers.

REAL ESTATE

One-half mile of ever running water, abounding in trout, together with 131 acres of land, including rich bottom lands; beautiful places; $5 per day can be made from the wood thereon; price $3,500; ten miles out, an San Antonio creek.

40 acres, barn, and 80-barrel cistern, two mile east of town, fine view, price $6,000.

30 acres level land, 10 acres forest, only $1,400; on main road.

For Sale by

Barnard, Blackstock & Shepherd

A. D. Barnard had been in real estate for over a decade.

IN SECURING

BEAUTIFUL HOMES

—IN A—

SEMI-TROPICAL CLIMATE

"WHERE DECEMBER'S AS PLEASANT AS MAY."

No Snow! No Ice! No Blizzards! No Cyclones!

No one can ever fully appreciate the charm of living in

Ventura County, Southern California

without a personal visit. The perennial sunshine must be felt, the balmy air laden with the perfume of orange blossoms must be drank, the luscious fruit must be plucked from the trees by one's own hand. The lime and lemon groves, the vineyards, the palms, the beautiful everblooming flowers, must be seen by one's own eyes in order to fully appreciate their charms and beauties. He who has not seen the town and

Mission of San Buenaventura,

THE RICH VALLEYS OF

SANTA CLARA, OJAI,
SIMI, CONEJO AND VENTURA,

should embrace the first opportunity of becoming fully acquainted with their attractions, which are Equable Climate, Health Resorts, Pleasure Resorts, Hot Sulphur Springs. Soda Springs, Beach Drives, Surf Bathing, Moss and Shell Gathering. Deep Sea and Mountain Trout Fishing, Fine Hunting, Churches, Public and Private Schools, Free Libraries and Perpetual Flower Gardens.

VENTURA COUNTY
WAS AWARDED FIRST COLD PREMIUM AT SAN FRANCISCO MECHANICS' FAIR FOR BEST EXHIBITION OF ITS PRODUCTIONS IN 1885.

For Country Homes, Orchards, Vineyards, Dairies, Farms, Apiaries, Stock Ranches, Mines, Oil Wells, City Properties and Business Houses, Call on or Address

☞*SEND US A TWO CENT STAMP FOR A COPY OF THIS PAPER.*

HUNT & WALDEN,

SAN BUENA VENTURA, - - - CALIF.

Plat
of
Obiols Tract
Part of Town of San Buena Ventura
Surveyed & Subdivided
Jan 17, 18, 1876
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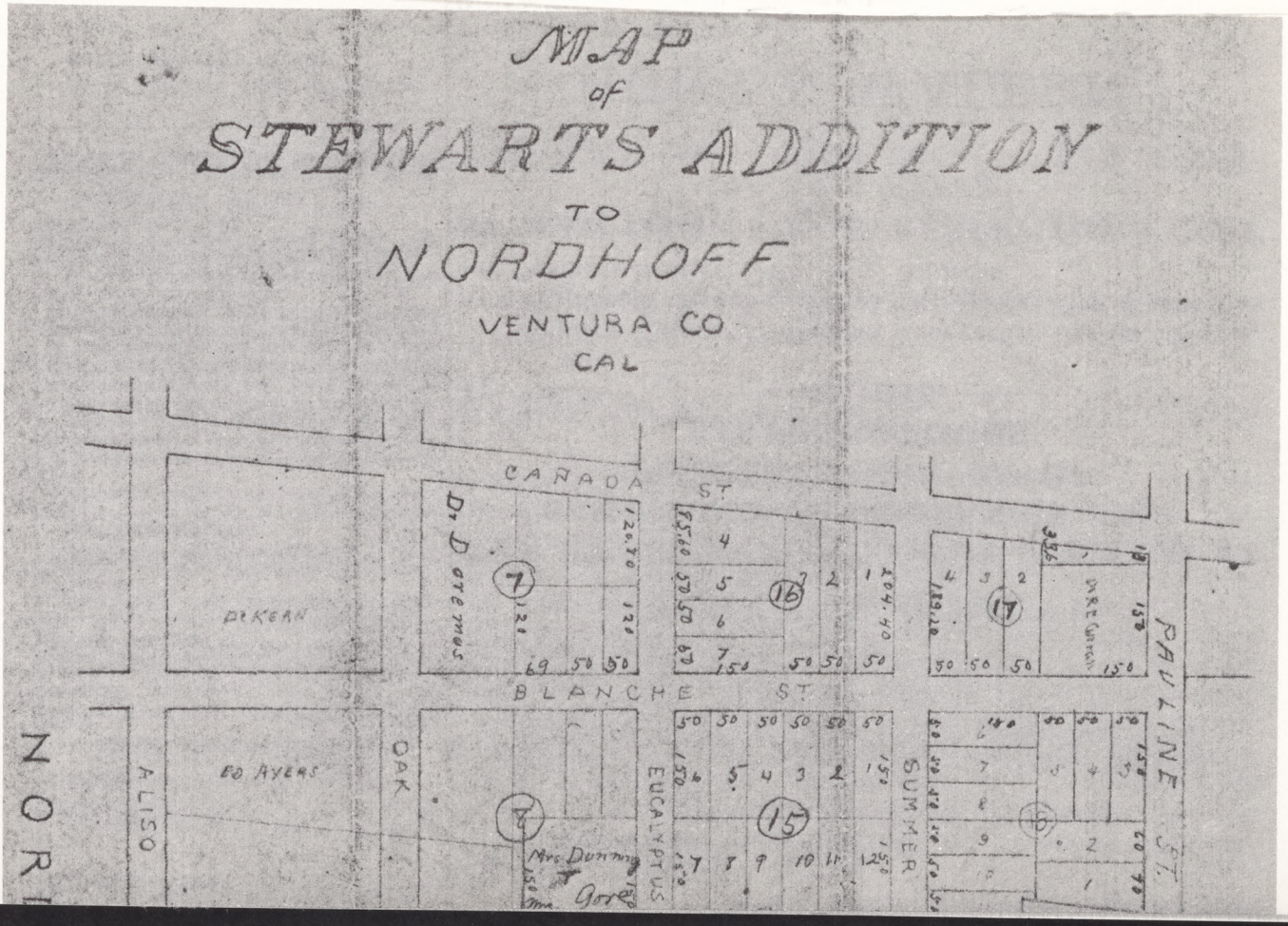
MAP
of
STEWARTS ADDITION
TO
NORDHOFF
VENTURA CO
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CANADA ST.
BLANCHE ST.
PAULINE ST.
SUMMER
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OAK
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PERKINS
ED AYERS
D. D. OTEMES
Mrs. Dunning
Gore
DR. E. Curtis
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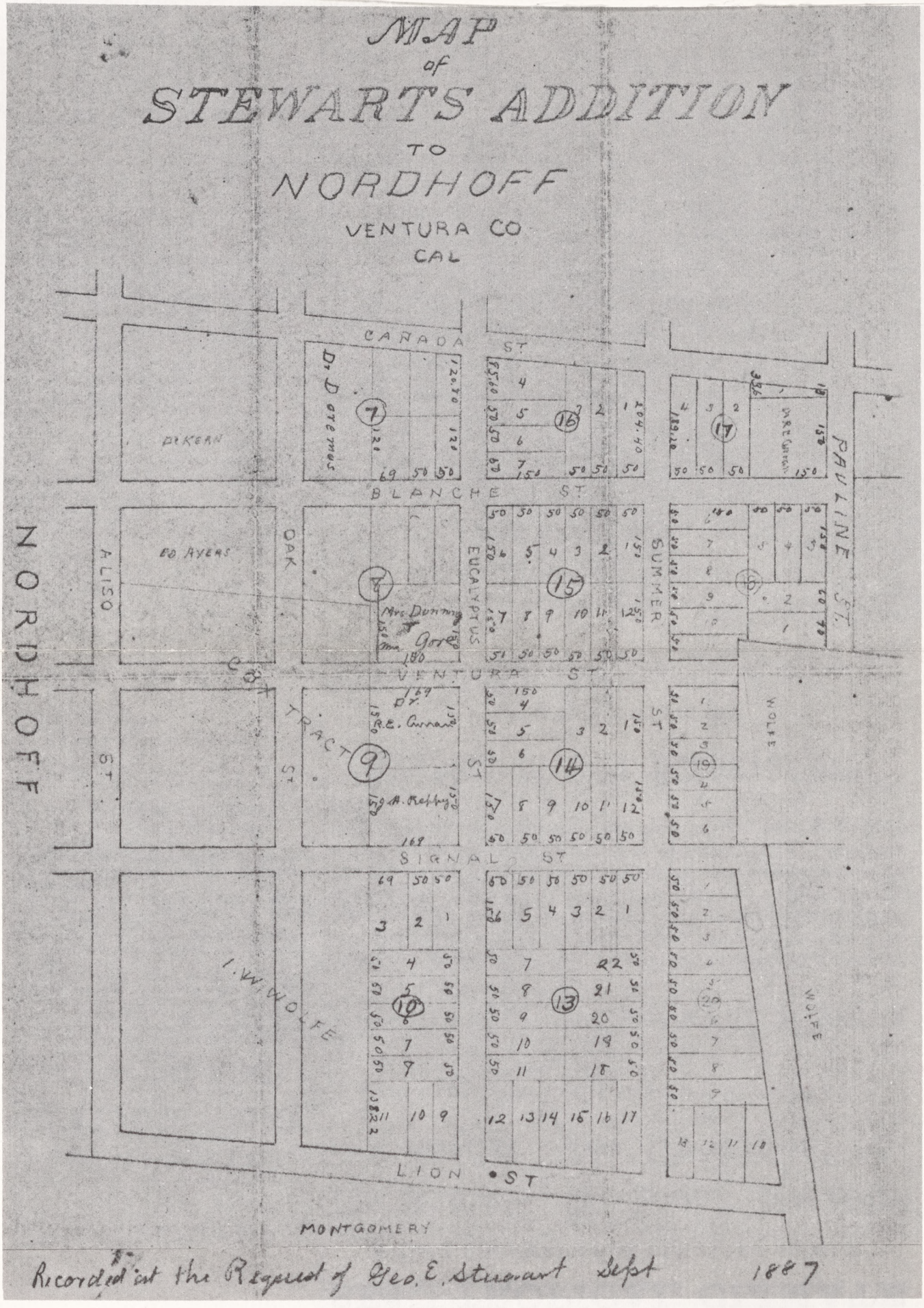
MAP of STEWARTS ADDITION TO NORDHOFF VENTURA CO CAL



Recorded at the Request of Geo. E. Stewart Sept 1887

The Boom of '87[1]

By John Montgomery[2]

If in the early seventies a sporting man had been asked to set a wager on the future capital of southern California, he would have staked his last dollar on Santa Barbara against all competitors and have thought it a sure bet. He might have gone a fraction on San Diego; but on the sleepy, humdrum, inland Town of the Angels he would not have risked a bogus nickle. To ordinary vision Santa Barbara had the inside track in the race as Queen City of the South:[3] the protecting sweep of her coast line; the sloping amphitheatre crowned by the picturesque mission; the magnificent view southeastward down the channel; the balmy zephyrs, fertile soil. All seemed eloquent to assure her the grand preeminence.

Of course the man who saw through a millstone knew better. There are today, and ever will be, gimblet-eyed prophets boring into futurity from the wrong side and seeing coming events in the rear, who foresaw Pasadena, Pomona and Riverside hatching in the sage brush and the big cedars growing in the woods for the mammoth wharf at Santa Monica. The railroad concentration at Los Angeles was no mystery to them ere Crocker & Co. and the Santa Fe magnates had secured a week's credit at a corner grocery.[4] But to ordinary mortals the southern boom was a decided surprise and many in our valley remained long incredulous to the doings of the cyclone that was whirling the solid earth skyward, and threatening to make Los Angeles a veritable City of the Angels.

This incredulity lasted till the whistle of the locomotive vibrated among the oil tanks of Santa Paula, and awoke us

1. The great Boom of the Eighties reached Ventura County late (in 1886) but peaked along with the rest of southern California (in 1888).

2. "John Montgomery" in Thompson & West, *History of Santa Barbara & Ventura Counties, California,* 416.

3. Remi Nadeau showed in his *City-makers,* 63-72 that the rivalry was between Ventura County and Los Angeles.

4. The Southern Pacific Railroad yards were at Colton, the Santa Fe at San Bernardino.

to a realization that the storm was coming and our valley might slip away from us in the whirlwind of excitement. The building of the line from Saugus stirred Ventura to its inner depths; the excitement of an invaded ant-hill was serenity in comparison. It was Ventura's first boom picnic, and she made a holiday of it. Town lots took responsive jumps with the descending strokes of the spike hammers on the advancing rails; and a game of pitch and toss was played with every lot, block and backyard within reach. Everybody wanted to grasp something and throw it off on somebody else. There seemed not enough of earth to go round. From the sun-kissed hilltop to the ocean's sands, from the dim and distant east to the far-fading west, no spot was secure from the grasp of the boom spirit.

A spontaneous growth of real estate agents (one it seemed to every front foot) cropped up on Main Street, embracing every trade, profession and religious belief (lawyers, mechanics, liverymen, and respectable fathers of families with characters for veracity heretofore unsullied). Public and domestic duties were neglected or postponed; doctors diagnosed the boom fever and felt the pulse of the boom market, leaving their patients to nature and luck; lawyers lost no time in vain pleadings but threw the naked codes at judge and jury to hurry off to clutch some fleeting bargain; hungry husbands with one o'clock in their stomachs shed tears of disappointment on the cold kitchen-stove while their wives were out hunting a three days' option from some obdurate lot-holder. Professions, principles and prudence excused nobody from joining in the dance: the man or woman who was not in the deal lacked 'sand'. Even the churchman, who had all his life preached the vanity of worldly investments, had to shed his wings to alight on an earthly corner lot, pending the final acquisition in Paradise.

While things were thus bubling in Ventura, The Ojai Valley folks kept their seven senses under lock and key and sat on the lid; only when the pressure became irresistible, did the hinges burst. The first evidence at Nordhoff of the approaching contagion was the sale on Ventura Avenue of a $50-an-acre tract for $300 the acre, and the unanimous verdict was that a fool and a wise man had collided; but when

STEWART'S ADDITION to NORDHOFF.

This Property is in the Town of Nordhoff,

The Popular Health Resort of Southern California.

THESE LOTS ARE FOR SALE

For Cash or on the Instalment Plan.

ALSO RANCH PROPERTY FOR SALE.

INQUIRE OF

GEO. E. STEWART,

Nordhoff.

George E. Stewart lists himself as
"Notary Public, Insurance & Dealer in Real Estate."

the fool sold the same piece for $500 he recovered his reputation, and a new fool took his place. And thus it was during the whole boom: a string of wise men in the rear, and a crop of fools ahead; the accumulated folly to be unloaded on the last unfortunate victim.

It was in the flowery month of May, dear to repose and the spring poet, that the local agitators at Nordhoff began in earnest to bestir themselves, swapping village blocks with one another and whittling redwood stakes for the grand layout. The atmosphere was charged with portentious predictions: on every expansive field was to arise a vast metropolis; under every tree, a palatial residence; the world was to be thinned out to populate our pent-up Utica. Had the dream been realized, we would have stood five-deep on each other's shoulders ere the year expired. Like the warning flag of the Weather Bureau, the shingle of the real estate agent hung out to forecast the coming storm: on his bulletin board a "Lie nailed" every hour attested his devotion to veracity. All was suspense as to what the future would bring forth when clouds of dust on the highway announced the coming of the outside boomers, veterans from Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, seeking new fields for their strategy.

It would be difficult to describe the varying phases of the contest. The first assault was made on the village proper; here men sold lots and blocks, bought them back next day and in many cases have clung to them affectionately to this date. When the narrow limits of the town were overrun, the war was carried to the adjacent fields, spreading wider and more wide till the mountains north, east and south barred the advance. Singular to relate, the Upper Valley with its splendid ranches escaped the assault and lay during the boom as peaceful as a slumbering babe. The fact is, the boomers wanted cities, not ranches; they were no country jerks. Soon brigades of dagger-belted, pole-armed surveyors unfurled their banners in the summer sun to invade peaceful meadows and cut into sylvan groves. A rival city two miles east, and another four miles west, threatened the supremacy of Nordhoff; their suburban extentions lost in the distant landscape. A corner on redwood stakes was imminent. Pet

names were bestowed on favorite localities;[5] and to fancy knolls and shady hollows a famous future was predicted, and recorded on maps and charts for coming generations. The familiar word "street" was discarded as old-fashioned, commonplace and behind the times; and grand avenues, serpentines and boulevards pronounced in keeping with vast conceptions.

Chapters might be written on the different characters of the boomers, showing their true natures (as is invariably the case with men during excitement): the timid man who let go too soon; and the sanguine man who held on too long. The real estate agent was a study; self-created from no preceding germ, he disproved Herbert Spencer's theory on spontaneous generation. In time he evolved into a 'land and water bureau' and finally vanished with the boom into nothingness.

The first Ojai Valley boom of 1873[6] was an honest, modest visitor, who brought his trunk to stay; the boom of 1887 was, on the contrary, a blusterer, a fancy swell, bright, facinating, but unprincipled. About the middle of August, without any warning, he left us; and no coaxing would call him back. He passed away from us like a dream. Despite his dubious character, his presence was a three-months' poem in the lovely valley. Yes, about the 10th or 12th of August the boom departed; and the gloom that succeeds a debauch settled on the valley. In vain the Southern Pacific sent a surveying party up the Creek Road a week or so later: the charm was gone. 'Twas sad to view the disconsolate victims after the battle; sad to view the deserted fields and groves, and the boom cities laid out like cemeteries, a buried hope under each stake.

5. The site of Mirror Lake was a sump at the foot of the grade; one of the two lakes in the county, its clear waters reflected the mountains.

6. John Montgomery, "The first Ojai boom" in the June 14, 1893 *Ojai*, 1.

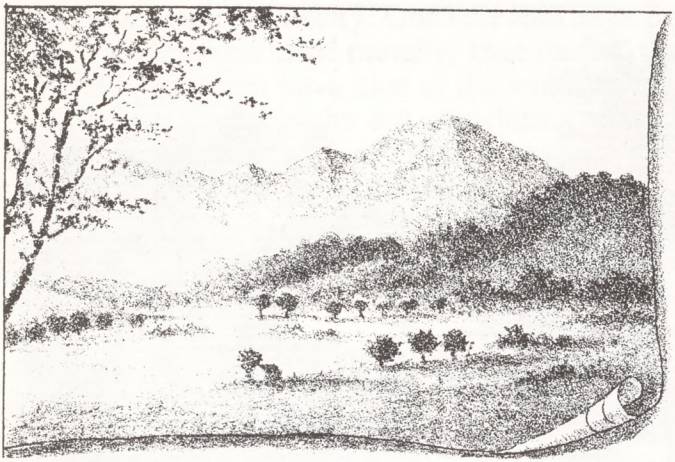
Ojai Valley

As regards a beauty of scenery, salubrity of climate and, to some extent, fertility of soil we venture to state that the Ojai Valley is unsurpassed by any favored spot in southern California. Proceeding from San Buenaventura by way of The Avenue at a distance of 4 or 5 miles, we enter a romantic pass where the San Antonio joins the Ventura River and from there travel through a continuous grove of sycamore, alder, oak and willow trees.

Having journeyed three miles through this wood, a choice of roads presents itself: the county road to the left and the Creek Road to right. If we choose the county road, we ascend a steep grade from the summit of which a grand panorama of valley and mountain scenery opens to our view. On our left, intervening between us and the distant mountains, flows the Ventura River in its winding and silvery course to the ocean while beyond in charming perspective lie the sloping fields and wooded glens of the Rancho Santa Ana. This enchanting scene is soon hidden from our view by the forest of live oaks through which we travel, extending to the Town of Nordhoff distant fifteen miles from the coast.

If instead of taking the county road we pass to the right (as before stated) we course along the river, crossing and recrossing its bed incessantly through a growth of timber that grows more dense as we proceed; and we finally ascend from the river to Nordhoff. Here we have an altitude of 800 feet above the ocean. At Nordhoff the valley takes the form of a basin surrounded on all sides by high mountains, some of them 3,000 feet.

Looking forward there appears no outlet in the wall of mountains; but if our ambition is still to climb, we ascend a broad wagon road and emerge in the Upper Valley, 500 feet above Nordhoff. The view from the summit of this grade is magnificent. To the west lies the little town three miles away, nestling under the distant foliage: the white spire of the chapel peeping over the tall trees while scattered over the valley, the cottages of the farms are glancing among clustering groves. On the other hand, to the east the orchards and



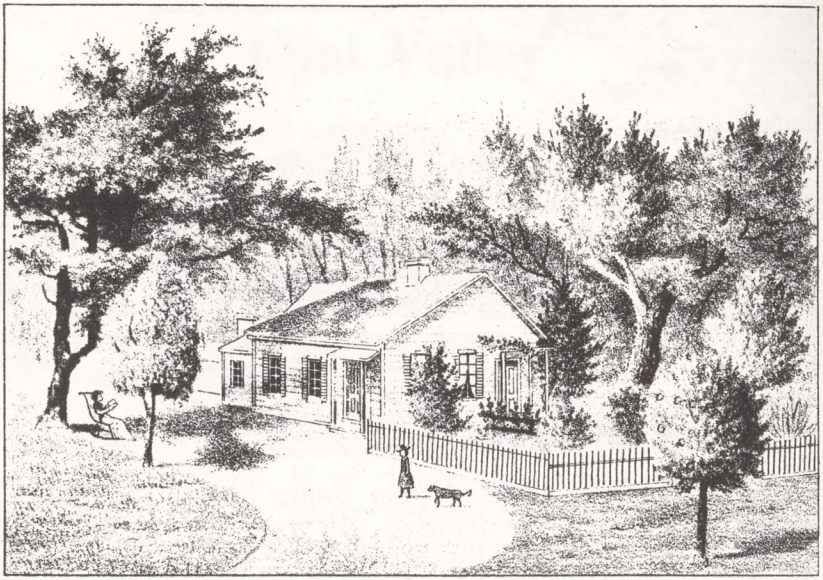
View of the Lower Valley

rolling grain fields of the Upper Valley extend for miles in varied perspective. Settlements are met with all over the valley and become more numerous and better improved as we proceed from Nordhoff, terminated in the orange and apricot orchards of the Upper Valley.

The soil is much diversified, consisting of clay of all shades, gravely and sandy loams with adobe and rich shale in the Upper Valley. Water is obtained at Nordhoff at a depth of fifteen feet. Artesian water is had in the Lower Valley at eighteen feet in moderate flow. It is believed that abundance of artesian water may be had at lower depth in this lake-formed basin, but no serious effort has been made to test the matter.

Fruit growing in the Lower Valley is yet in its infancy, but the young orchards are vigorous and promising; and we have no doubt the region will be noted in the near future for its apricots, prunes and pears, and particularly for its olives and raisins. As regards citrus fruits, any doubt will be dispelled by a visit to the orange grove of Prof. Buckman,[7] where the trees are incumbered by their load of golden wealth. The scale, so injurious elsewhere, cannot live in the dry air of the valley, and drops off the trees introduced from outside localities. The orchards of the Upper Valley are very produc-

7. John Montgomery, "Singular characters" in the June 28, 1893 *Ojai,* 1.



Upper Valley residence of Joseph Hobart

tive, giving work to several large driers. Here, too, the orange and the lemon succeed without irrigation, as may be seen on the property of Captain Robinson[8] and J. Hobart.[9] The Ojai has heretofore been noted for its wheat and barley crop, but cereals must soon give way to the more profitable of fruit and grapes.

The valley needs enterprise and capital to develop its water resources and to break up the grain farms into smaller tracts of ten to twenty acres. The settlers were so contented with their lot that few farms were for sale previous to the railroad boom. Now, however, there is more disposition to sell; and land may be had at from thirty to one hundred dollars per acre according to quality and location. As an instance of the prosperity of The Ojai, we are informed that there are only two of the farms incumbered with mortgages in the two valleys.

If we attempt to do full justice to the climate of The Ojai, we might be accused of exaggeration by persons unac-

8. "Quality of the soil" in Thompson & West, *op. cit.*, 412.
9. "Joseph Hobart" in *ibid,* 412-413.

quainted with its salubrity. One fact told to us by an old resident will illustrate this: namely, that during fourteen years only three children have died in the valley, and two of them were only a few months old. Scarlatina[10] was twice introduced from outside, but never extended beyond the individuals attacked. This immunity from contagion results from the absence of malaria. The diseases that are relieved or permanently cured by a residence in the valley are, notably, asthma, lung trouble and morbid affections resulting from malaria.

The only gap in the mountain walls that surround the valley is to the west towards the ocean. The chilly north wind and the drying east wind are unknown; the north wind, in fact becomes here a northwest wind, entering the valley through the Matilija gorge. During the summer months the ocean breeze climbing over mountains and winding through canyons visits the valley daily, turning the windmills and moderating the heat of our ardent California sunshine.

There are two good hotels in the valley; but lack of accommodation has this year driven many tourists to seek hospitality in private houses, and many more have been obliged to return to the coast unable to find accommodation. Nordhoff, a cosy little hamlet, has two stores, blacksmith shop and carpenter shop, schoolhouse, hotel and a Congregational Chapel. There is also a fine Presbyterian Church in this valley. Another hotel is situated in the center of the low Ojai; and both valleys boast of some fine private residences.

Among the attractions of the valley we have to include trout fishing and deer hunting. We must not omit the hot springs of the Matilija, situated about six miles from Nordhoff, and much frequented by those suffering from rheumatism. In conclusion we will say that there is a prosperous future in store for The Ojai as in our opinion there are few places that have equal elements of success. We are informed that the Town of Nordhoff is to be extended north and east, and that Santa Barbara capitalists are interested in the movement. *The Daily Free Press,* May 10, 1887.

10. Scarlet fever.

Ventura Cou

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORIAL SOCIETY

Quarterly

Vol. XXVIII
No. 2

Winter
1983

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The headquarters of the Ventura County Historical Society is the Ventura County Historical Museum, 100 E. Main, Ventura, California. Annual memberships are family ($20) business ($100) and student ($5), and life ($500).

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Ventura County Historical Society

Quarterly

Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 Winter 1983

Grant W. Heil, Editor

The *Quarterly* is published from the Society's headquarters. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions by authors of the articles. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the Staff includes Robert O. Browne, Paul Clodi, Miriam Dudley, Roy Eisele, Charles H. Heil, David W. Hill, Danilo Matteini, Johanna D. Overby, Austin B. Perley, Ynez Rodriquez, Tom Roe, Patricia A. Sales, Richard D. Willett and Helen Wright.

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Notice

David B. Combe is a professional librarian and a member of the staff at the E. P. Foster headquarters, assigned to documents. The photographs were supplied by Ventura County Library and the Ventura County Historical Museum. Danilo Matteini drew the cover.

D. PHILIPPO IV.

HISPANIARVM, ET INDIARVM REGI OPT. MAX. IDEST, OMNIVM FERE NASCENTIS, OBEVNTISQVE SOLIS REGIONVM IMPERATORI SEMPER AVGVSTO, PIO, FOELICI, ET BONO REIPVBL. NATO, D. IOANNES DE SOLORZANO PEREIRA, EIVS IN REGIO LIMANO CONVENTV PERVANI REGNI NOVI ORBIS SENATOR S.P.D.

VM Divi Parentis tui, Pij pariter ac Desiderati, honestissimis codicillis (REX omniũ, quos Sol usquã adspexit, AVGVSTISSIME & POTENTISSIME) ex Primarijs Salmaticẽsis Scholæ Cæsarei Iuris Antecessoribus ad Regiũ hoc, & egregiũ Peruani Regni Novi Orbis Prætoriũ, nihil tale ambiens, aut cogitans, fuerim delegatus, vel, ut alij fortè dixerint, relegatus, nihil prius, aut antiquius habui, quàm oblatam mihi Provinciam hilari atque alacri mẽte capessere, & omni studio curare, ut me non solùm tanti muneris, verùm tanti quoque Electoris dignum administrũ ostenderem. Nam si æquabilis (ut cum Cassiodoro loquar) prædicandus est, quem iustus elegerit, si continentiâ prædītus, quem moderatus adscivit, omnium profectò capax debet esse meritorum, qui iudicem cunctarum meruit habere virtutum. Spartam igitur, quam nactus eram, ornare desiderans, multis primùm vigilijs indagare, & cognoscere cœpi situm, provincias, & terminos huius vastissimi & ditissimi Imperij, quod Catholicis Hispaniæ Regibus in Fidei, Pietatis & Religionis præmium Divinitùs datum, vulgò ementito, & suffurato vocabulo Americam nuncupant, alij tralatitio Indias Occidentales, & alij veriùs, & propriùs Orbem Novum appellant; cùm sola hæc globi terreni pars, tres alias, antiquis cognitas, magnitudine superet, efficiatq; ut MAIESTATIS tuæ opes, atq; fastigia, margine cœli claudãtur, & eisdẽ, quibus terrarum Orbis, finibus terminentur. Deinde verò peculiares leges, schedulas, atque ordinationes inquirens, quæ

CANON MISSÆ.

Sacérdos exténdens, & jungens manus, élevans ad cælum óculos, & statim demíttens profúndè inclinâtus ante altâre, mánibus super eo pósitis, dicit:

TE ígitur, clementíssime Pater, per Jesum Christum Fílium tuum Dóminum nostrum súpplices rogâmus ac pétimus, oscultâtur altâre, uti accépta hábeas, & benedícas, jungat manus, deínde signet ter super oblàta, hæc ✠ dona, hæc ✠ múnera, hæc ✠ sancta sacrifícia illibàta: extensis mánibus proséquitur, in primis quæ tibi offérimus pro Ecclésia tua sancta cathólica, quam pacificâre, custodíre, adunâre & régere dignêris toto orbe terrârum, unà cum fámulo tuo Papa nostro N. & Antístite nostro N. & Rege nostro N. & ómnibus orthodóxis atque cathólicæ & Apostólicæ fídei cultóribus.

Commemorátio pro vivis.

MEménto Dómine famulórum famularúmque tuârum N. & N. jungit manus, orat aliquántulùm pro quibus orâre inténdit: deínde mánibus extensis proséquitur, & ómnium circumstántium, quorum tibi fides cógnita est, & nota devótio: pro quibus tibi offérimus, vel qui tibi ófferunt hoc sacrifícium laudis, pro se, suísque ómnibus, pro redemptióne animârum suârum, pro spe salútis & incolumitâtis suæ: tibíque reddunt vota sua ætérno Deo, vivo & vero.

Infra Actiónem.

COmmunicántes, & memóriam venerán

Two pages from books in the Mission library

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE IN VENTURA:
A BRIEF HISTORY

By David B. Combe

From the earliest mission days there have always been books in Ventura. A survey in 1835 shows that altogether the missions in California owned 3,185 volumes, an average of over 151 per mission.[1] When the Bibliotheca Sancti Bonaventurae was inventoried in 1942 it was found that the oldest book had been printed in Madrid in 1639. Of the 95 titles 45 were printed in Spanish, 24 in Latin, 18 in French, five in Italian, two in English and one in Portuguese. Seven were imprinted in the 1600s, 65 in the 1700s, and 17 in the 1800s; the dates of the remaining six could not be determined.[2]

The correspondence of Fray Jose Senan between 1806 and 1822 detailed the first recorded receipt of books and magazines in Ventura. He was sent copies of *Gazeta de Mexico,* Nicholle's *Geographical Dictionary,* and a Bible and concordance among others. Fray Senan asked his superiors in Mexico City for subscriptions to *Gazeta de Mexico, El Desenquano* and *Semanario,* which would then be available to lend to other missions. This may well have been the first interlibrary loan program in southern California.[3]

When in 1827 the Mexican Congress passed the law expelling all Spanish born priests and settlers, Fray Jose Altimira, the missionary in charge at Ventura, left the country rather than wait to be expelled. In the investigation that followed, the gatekeeper of the mission testified "that on the day when Father Altimira departed, he took with him only a little box of cigars and some books."[4] Fray Francisco Uria, Fray Altimira's successor wrote in his report for 1828 that the mission school had not been established "for a lack of ABC books and primers."[5] In 1829 Alfred Robinson recorded in his book on *Life in California,* "We arrived before din-

ner, finding the Reverend Father Francisco Uria closely wrapped up in his studies."[6]

Little else regarding books or libraries appeared in print until the *Ventura Signal* was founded in 1871. That there were reading people in Ventura was evident from the May 13, 1871 edititorial in the *Signal,* discussing the town's post office.

> It will be a matter of interest to know that about 350 copies of newspapers and periodicals are taken from this [post] office . . . of the regular papers, etc., coming from outside the following are the leading ones:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *Sacramento Weekly Union* | 62 |
> | *New York Tribune* | 52 |
> | *Weekly San Francisco Bulletin* | 27 |
> | *Daily Bulletin* | 7 |
> | *Daily San Franciso Alta* | 10 |
> | *Weekly San Francisco Alta* | 14 |
> | *Harper's Monthly* | 11 |
> | *Harper's Weekly* | 24 |
>
> and 140 odd others of all kinds.

Other advertisements in the *Signal* indicate that books were also available. With the increased community pride that must have accompanied the formation of Ventura County out of Santa Barbara County in 1873, the impetus for not falling behind nearby communities must have been great. In any event it was in the June 21, 1873 *Signal* that the first suggestion for a library in Ventura appeared. "A meeting of those interested in the formation of a reading club and library association will be held at the residence of Mr. L.C. McKeeby Monday evening next (June 23). All are invited." The next week, June 28, the *Signal* reported: "An enthusiastic meeting was held at the residence of Mr. L.C. McKeeby last Monday evening, when a society was organized called the Ventura Reading Club! It was also decided to suggest to the people of Ventura County, at some future date, the propriety of organizing a library association." It seems probable that Judge McKeeby was the originator of the club as the first two meetings were in his home at 69

Judge Lemuel Clark McKeeby

South California Street. Other announcements in the *Signal* reported five more meetings at the home of Judge McKeeby, two each at Dr. Bard's and W.E. Shepard's, and one each at the home of Mrs. C.S. Preble and Frank Perkins.

The newspaper likewise reported the second meeting in its July 5 issue. ". . . A committee was appointed to solicit subscriptions for a library. It is very desirable that a library should be established and we hope that a plan will be devised by which it may be done. Let us have a library, if it is to be a small one at first."

Two weeks later the *Signal* reported that the Reading Club "decided to place the library enterprise in the hands of Mrs. [J.L.] Sturtevant, a lady eminently fitted for the trust." Mrs. Sturtevant ran a millinery shop in Ventura, and apparently was appointed a committee of one to devise a plan for establishing a library in Ventura.

The next issue, July 26, carries a long appeal for the proposed library, written anonymously by "A Resident."

> There is now a plan on foot in regard to a town library, of which most of our people have heard . . . We must either advance or retrograde mentally, and surely we would not go backward. The question arises: How can the masses be improved? By giving them access to a library, small, perhaps at first, but sure to increase in accordance with the generosity of our citizens. Other towns have libraries — why should not we? Shall it be said that people of San Buenaventura will not support a library? . . . Every facility is now offered us to get up a library for the least possible sum: rent and librarian's salary have not to be paid . . .

The last sentence is of interest as it suggests an offer of free quarters for the library and unpaid help for the care of materials. While no official records demonstrate this, Edwin M. Sheridan said in an article in the June 27, 1930 *Ventura County Star* that there was such an offer.

> The town clerk at the time [1873] agreed to take care of the books, were they brought to his office. A

place would be provided for them on shelves to be put in. More books were put on than taken out and the library practically took care of itself.

However, several things suggest that Sheridan's recollection may be incorrect. The *Signal* had carefully covered the development of the Reading Club and it seems unlikely that the paper would have missed such an important event as the moving of the club's books to the office of the town clerk; in fact, W.E. Shepard, in whose home two of the organizational meetings had been held, was Editor of the *Signal.* In addition it was not until 1878, five years later, that the town clerk, J.F. Newby, was hired to be librarian also.[7]

Many months passed before the Reading Club again received notice in the *Signal* on July 18, 1874. "Now is the time for the friends of improvement to strike. They could, doubtless, by putting some coin in either of the enterprises secure a hall for a library and reading room. Would it not be well to consider the matter at once?"

Again, some months went by with no publicity, but efforts must have been underway for on October 10, 1874 the *Signal* announced a major step toward the formation of the Ventura Library Association.

THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ELECTION
OF OFFICERS AND OTHER PRELIMINARIES

A number of citizens interested in the formation of a library association met at the residence of Judge McKeeby on Wednesday evening last. The following officers were to serve a term of three months.

President - B.T. Williams
Secretary - J.J. Sheridan
Treasurer - Mrs. J.L. Sturtevant

On motion Messrs. L.F. Eastin and J.C. Brewster and Mrs. Sturtevant were appointed a committee to draft constitution and by-laws, to report next meeting. Judge Wason was appointed to solicit subscriptions at Saticoy, L.R. Herbert on the Ojai, and Miss Trowbridge and Mr. Boquist in Ventura.

The next week the newspaper reported the success of the committee at gathering $5.00 memberships.

> Parties who have been circulating subscription papers for the library have uniformly met with good success. Nearly enough names have already been obtained to buy $300 worth of books. Three hundred dollars in coin will buy, at catalog prices, $400 worth of books in New York. The library, we are glad to say, is an assured success.

Weekly meetings continued to be held, but the town was thoroughly canvassed and additional subscribers were being found more slowly. On October 31 the *Signal* noted that the fundraising committee was sponsoring a program to "consist of the pantomime 'The Old-Fashioned Donation Party', music and reading" at the home of Judge McKeeby.

Two weeks later, the *Signal* editorially supported a reading room in connection with the library, but it was more of a social hall for young people to meet, play chess or whist.

> As a business matter, as an investment, it will pay. As a reformatory means, a reading room and library are unequaled; and therefore, those engaged in the work of temperance and reformation should assist vigorously.

A meeting was announced for the formal organization of the Ventura Library Association. "The subscribers of the library fund should not forget the meeting at Henning's Hall next Monday evening. A full attendance is desired."

The certificate of election filed with the County Clerk stated:

> On the 2nd day of November, A D 1874, in the town of San Buenaventura, at Henning's Hall in said town, at 7½ o'clock PM, an election was held for provisional Directors or Trustees and Officers of this Corporation; at which election there was present a majority of the members of the Association who voted at said election with the following result: For Directors or Trustees and Officers: Milton Wason Director and President, James Daly Director and Vice President, L.F. Eastin Director and

Miss Cecelia Perkins

Recording Secretary, Charles G. Finney Jr. Director and Corresponding Secretary, George S. Gilbert Jr. Director and Treasurer, C.H. Bailey Director and John J. Sheridan Director.

The meeting was adjourned until November 11 for its permanent organization. At this meeting the provisional officers presented the proposed constitution and by-laws, which were approved, the certificate of incorporation was approved and the provisional officers elected to a regular term of office.

On November 14 the *Signal* reported:

"The Ventura Library Association has now been organized according to state law, and a paper has been signed by more than twenty gentlemen declaring their intention to establish in San Buenaventura a public library and reading room, and at the proper time articles of incorporation will be filed."

Mr. J.F. Newby, City Clerk for over twenty years and for ten years Ventura City Librarian, wrote in Storke's *History of Ventura County* a summary of the events of the next few years.[8]

The association was incorporated November 23, 1874. The association arranged for a fair and festival, the proceeds of which went to purchase books and furniture. All members were required to pay $5.00 per annum toward supporting the library, and those who did not pay the $5.00 for membership paid twentyfive cents a month for the privilege of drawing books. A room was secured and some 600 volumes purchased. Mr. J.W. Maxwell being the first librarian, was succeeded by Miss Cecelia Perkins. The library was kept up until the spring of

Miss Florence Vandever

1878, when it became involved in debt and was closed.

In August, 1878, the library trustees . . . made a proposition to the Board of Town Trustees to transfer the assets of the association to the town, provided the town would pay the library indebtedness, and agree to levy a library tax under a state law allowing incorporated towns to levy a library tax. The town accepted the proposition and took charge of the library August 21, 1878 with J.F. Newby as librarian, he continuing to fill the position until February 1, 1888.

After the transfer of assets, the library basically continued on a subscription basis for about four more years until finances required action by the Library Board. The *Signal* reported the Board's action on January 14, 1882.

The Library Board met on Monday evening and among other things decided that in the future books from the library shall be absolutely free to all who pay taxes within the town limits; and, in accordance with a numerously signed petition, the Library will be open in the future on Saturday evenings. The Librarian was authorized to make up a list of one hundred new books to purchase.

For the first time Ventura had a free public library. Mr. Newby was librarian from 1878 to February 1888 when he was succeeded by Florence Vandever, the

John Franklin Newby

daughter of General William Vandever, the first Congressman from Ventura County. Miss Vandever remained in charge of the City Library until the formation of the County Library in 1916, and she then continued as head of the Ventura branch until 1924. In his *History of Ventura County,* Sol Sheridan noted that all who lived in Ventura at the time remember that "to get a book they should have to call Mr. J.F. Newby from some fascinating game he was playing with his cronies."[9]

Circulation figures for the City Library's early years gradually increased, then fell.

YEAR	CIRCULATION	YEAR	CIRCULATION
1878/79	1545	1885	9756
1879/80	1435	1886	10298
1880/81	1806	1887	10412
1882	5248	1888	10425
1883	6265	1889	8966
1884	6759	1890	7362

The list of periodicals that were subscribed to is interesting.[10] In 1884 the library received *Harper's, Century, St. Nicholas, Atlantic, Popular Science, Overland,* and *Art Amateur;* the weeklies included *Harper's, Leslie's, Puck, Argonaut, Harper's Young People,* and *Youth's Companion;* and three San Francisco newspapers: the *Chronicle,* the *Examiner* and the *Alta.*

The 1889 report notes others by then received including *Scientific American, Harper's Bazaar, Scribner's* and *North American Review. Atlantic* had been dropped and a Los Angeles newspaper, the *Express,* was being received.

The minutes of the Library Board are available from 1874 to the present time.[11] A complete review of these can not be attempted here. However, the library worked under the direction of the board, which approved all expenditures, and the gradual growth of the Ventura City Library is clear.

The next steps toward library service took place at the state level. In 1909 the legislature passed enabling legislation providing for county library service.[12] A

Adolfo Camarillo

county library had to be established by a vote of the people of the county. An entire county had to be included, the Board of Supervisors was to function as the Library Board and the supporting tax had be be levied on the entire county.

Harriet G. Eddy, County Free Library Organizer at the California State Library from 1909 to 1918, notes in her memoirs that the implementation of the new law was doomed from the start.[13] Cities already supporting libraries objected to supporting county libraries in addition. Some areas did not want service, or feared they would be under-served. Miss Eddy visited Ventura County in February 1910 where she reported that "The library climate was like a trip to the South Pole . . . I went to see the chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Adolph Camarillo . . . 'Come back when you have a better law' was his only encouragement."[14] Mr. Camarillo did not forget the library, and in 1915 invited Miss Eddy back after changes in the law allowed areas to remove themselves from the library district and thus escape the tax. Don Adolpho was no longer on the Board, but as Miss Eddy describes him, he was still "the largest tax payer in the county, one of its wealthiest citizens, and reputedly its most influential."[15]

Carnegie Library at Oxnard

She describes a flurry of activity, printed badges, telephone campaigns and the like. Miss Eddy also reported the opposition of the Oxnard supervisor. Oxnard had a Carnegie Library dedicated in May of 1907. By 1909 Oxnard had also established branch libraries in different parts of the county including Moorpark and Camarillo, and was functioning as though it was a county library. Oxnard did not wish to pay the county for a service the city was already providing.[16]

> Finally the day came for a vote. Mr. Camarillo was in his element. He had been chosen leader of the delegation, and he led them as proudly as a general on parade. A hush fell on the room when Mr. Camarillo went forward to the rail. In his slow, Spanish-American clipped accent, he said, "Gentlemen, we have come to you today about a county library for our county. We do not *a'hsk* you to establish one. We *demand* it." That was all! The crowd was taken by a storm. It cheered and gave Mr. Camarillo an ovation. From then on, it was difficult for the chairman of the board to pick the speaker, for there were so many on their feet at once.

. . . Then someone badgered the Oxnard Supervisor, asking why he was opposed, seeing the . . . library tax did not affect Oxnard . . . [He said he would] withdraw his opposition but for one thing: The county librarian's salary was paid from the salary fund, which was levied on the entire county. He was against that. To my amazement and sheer delight, the District Attorney (I didn't even know he was present), said mildly he could remedy that by transferring the amount of the salary from the library fund to the salary fund. The Oxnard Supervisor nodded in assent, one of the women ran up to him and pinned on a badge, and the room went into an uproar. In the din the Chairman managed to call for a vote, and, with a bang of his gavel he announced that the resolution to establish a county library had been unanimously adopted.[17]

Miss Eddy described a remarkable scene of pandemonium, with the basic credit for the foundation of the library being given to Don Adolpho. The Board of Supervisor's minutes were a bit more restrained.

On Thursday, April 8, 1915:

This is the time set by publication for hearing the petition for the establishment of a Free County Library. After hearing arguments for and against same, the Board, upon motion of Supervisor Perkins seconded by Supervisor Shiells, takes the matter under advisement at this time.[18]

And the next day, Friday, April 9, 1915:

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County has taken the necessary steps prescribed by Chapter 68, section 2, statues 1911, preliminary to the establishment of a county free library, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County, State of California does hereby establish a county free library for the County of Ventura, State of California, and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors make a levy at the time provided for by law for the purpose

Miss Julia Steffa

of said County Free Library, and be it further RESOLVED, that no work be taken up or done hereafter until funds therefor are available in the County Treasury.[19]

The Ventura *Star* painted a different picture. It reported three people speaking before Don Adolpho: "F.L. Fairbanks of Fillmore," "E.S. Thacher of Nordhoff" and "H.S. Sharp of Saticoy", all speaking in favor of the County Library.

The *Star* then continued:

> A. Camarillo said his people were in favor and felt that the small tax would be nothing of a burden and were glad enough to pay the small tax, for the vast good to be derived. He said his people would thank the board to give the people something back for their money.[20]

There are obviously many differences among the three accounts. Possibly Miss Eddy's memory may have made the event more elaborate after many years. Certainly her version is the more dramatic and memorable.

Miss Julia Steffa became County Librarian on January 1, 1916, having received her notice of appointment on December 22, 1915. She began immediately to work. On January 5 she ordered one typewriter, $126.00

worth of shelving, a card catalog case for $91.90 and one book truck for $36.00, a librarian's desk for $38.50, a chair for $9.00, a subscription for *Cumulative Book Index* ($5.00 per year), and assorted stationary and stamps ($3.00 worth). On January 10 she had her first branch when the George Thacher Memorial Library in Ojai entered the County Library. The Ojai staff was retained.

Areas applied to the Board of Supervisors to enter the Library system by agreeing to be taxed. On February 4, Simi, Fillmore and Piru joined; on March 9, Saticoy and Santa Susana and the Torrey School District joined also. On the same day, service began in Ojai and Simi, and Miss Steffa noted that 516 volumes had been accessioned and were being prepared for circulation.

Miss Steffa reported the work of the 1st quarter, 1916 in a letter to the Board of Supervisors dated April 1.

> The Ventura County Free Library now has 12 branches, comprising 4 towns and 8 school districts. The 4 towns, Nordhoff, Simi, Piru, and Ozena, and three school districts, Springville, Torrey and Punta Gorda are now receiving county library service. The branches requested by Saticoy and Santa Susana are being prepared for and the Fillmore Branch will open on April 1st.
>
> There were 855 volumes accessioned during the quarter, 853 of which were purchased and 2 were gifts. The total number of cardholders is 145 and the circulation was 1162 volumes. There were 37 special request books sent to the branches and 78 volumes, of which 76 were from the State Library, were borrowed from other libraries for the use of patrons.
>
> During March visits were made in the interests of county library service to the Mound, Wheeler Canyon, Piru, Torrey School District, Fillmore, Springville School District and Moorpark.
>
> The County Teacher's Library, consisting of about 1200, was transfered by the County Superintendent of Schools to the County Free Library on March 13, 1916 and the work of preparing these volumes for circulation has been begun.[21]

City Hall-Library in 1913; Post-storm lighting shows the statue on Main Street

Space will not allow a full account of the almost weekly growth fostered by Miss Julia Steffa. Her successor as County Librarian, the greatly loved Elizabeth Topping, perhaps summed up her predecessor's work best:

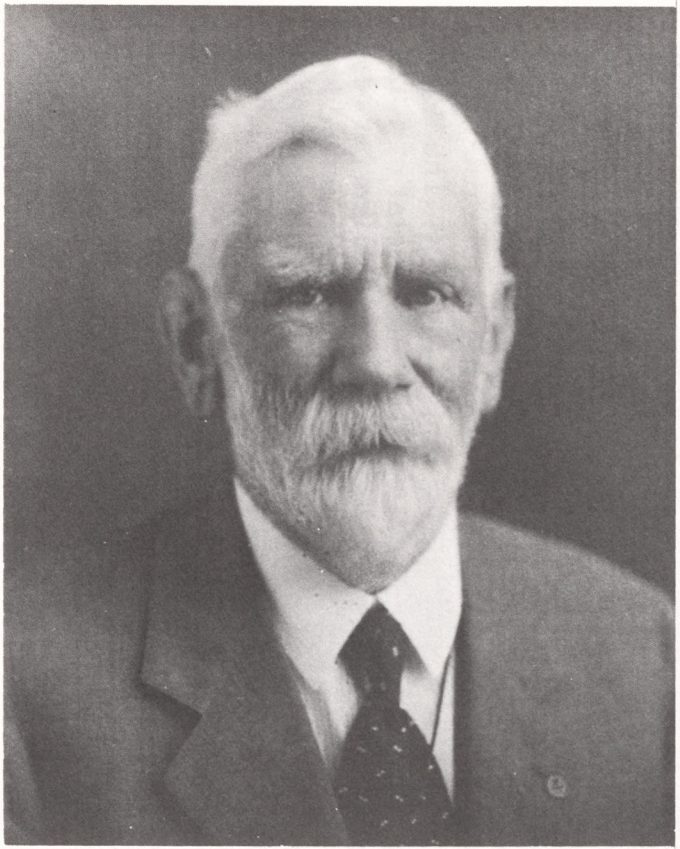
> The librarian was Miss Julia Steffa to whom all credit for the wisely laid foundation is due . . . She died in 1926 at thirty-nine. She had put in years of strenuous work in this county . . . It is quite probably that this . . . contributed to her ill-health . . .[22]

It was on June 27, 1916 that the Ventura City Library petitioned to join the county system, but with a difference. The library would retain its autonomy in spite of its branch status. Over the years this functional independence has been lost.

A report at about this time gave a picture of the Ventura City Library as it became a branch. The library was described as "two upstairs rooms in a poor location . . . each 24x48. Front room used as a reading and study room combined. Rear room contains Librarian's desk and aisles of books. There are no children's rooms . . . nor any way of fixing present quarters for same" in its location in City Hall at the north-west corner of Main and California Street.[23] The headquarters for the County Library was located in crowded quarters in the Court House. This administrative center also gave library service to Ventura although the City Library was only a block away. This situation of affiliation with separate quarters rather than consolidation continued for five years.

New books were being added monthly. The 1916 report showed a circulation of 6,648, a total of 1,327 registered card holders with average circulation per borrower of 12.6 books. There were 5,500 volumes added during the year. The library had 45 "distributing agencies" including 11 general branches and 34 school branches.[24]

The 1917 report showed 53 "distributing agencies," 15 general branches and 38 schools. Circulation was 32,176 with 18,918 fiction, 3,110 non-fiction, 9,163 juveniles and 985 magazines.[25]



Eugene Preston Foster

Mrs. Orpha W. Foster

1917 also brought controversy similar to that which has ocurred before and since at libraries around the world.

COUNTY LIBRARY CARRIES NO PRO-GERMAN BOOKS

> When the libraries of the country come under investigation as disseminators of German propaganda the investigators will have to skip the Ventura County Library, for Miss Steffa says that there are no pro-German books or pamphlets in her collection, nor would she have any of them there . . . and steps have been taken looking to a general investigation of all libraries of the country with a view to weeding out all of the pernicious pro-German reading matter which has been in the past and is now being put before the public.[26]

In 1918 the first inkling of a major change appeared in the *Star* with the report of rumors that the Foster family was preparing plans for a gift to the people of Ventura. It was not until October 1919 that E.P. Foster decided to "call attention to an error in the report" by announcing a gift to the city of the Shepard lot on Main Street near Chestnut, worth $12,000, and a combined city hall and library building to cost $50,000. The city agreed to sell the current city hall, and use the proceeds to furnish and equip the library.[27]

The proposed library was nearly lost in January 1920. The American Legion, together with a citizens committee, proposed a different site for a library which would serve as a memorial to the "boys from this county who went in the service" in the war with Germany. "On the assumption the construction of two buildings for library purposes at this time would be without necessity", Mr. and Mrs. Foster put their plans aside.[28]

After a meeting in March 1920, the American Legion dropped its plans and in April the City Board of Trustees read and passed a resolution expressing the thanks of the people of Ventura for the gift.

> Whereas, Mr. and Mrs. E.P. Foster have heretofore tendered to the City the gift of a Library and City

Hall building to be erected on a portion of Block 62 in said city, and said donors have been given the personal assurance of a majority of the members of this Board that the Board would accept and occupy such building as a Library and City Hall, and, if agreeable to the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County that a joint City and County Library shall be housed therein.

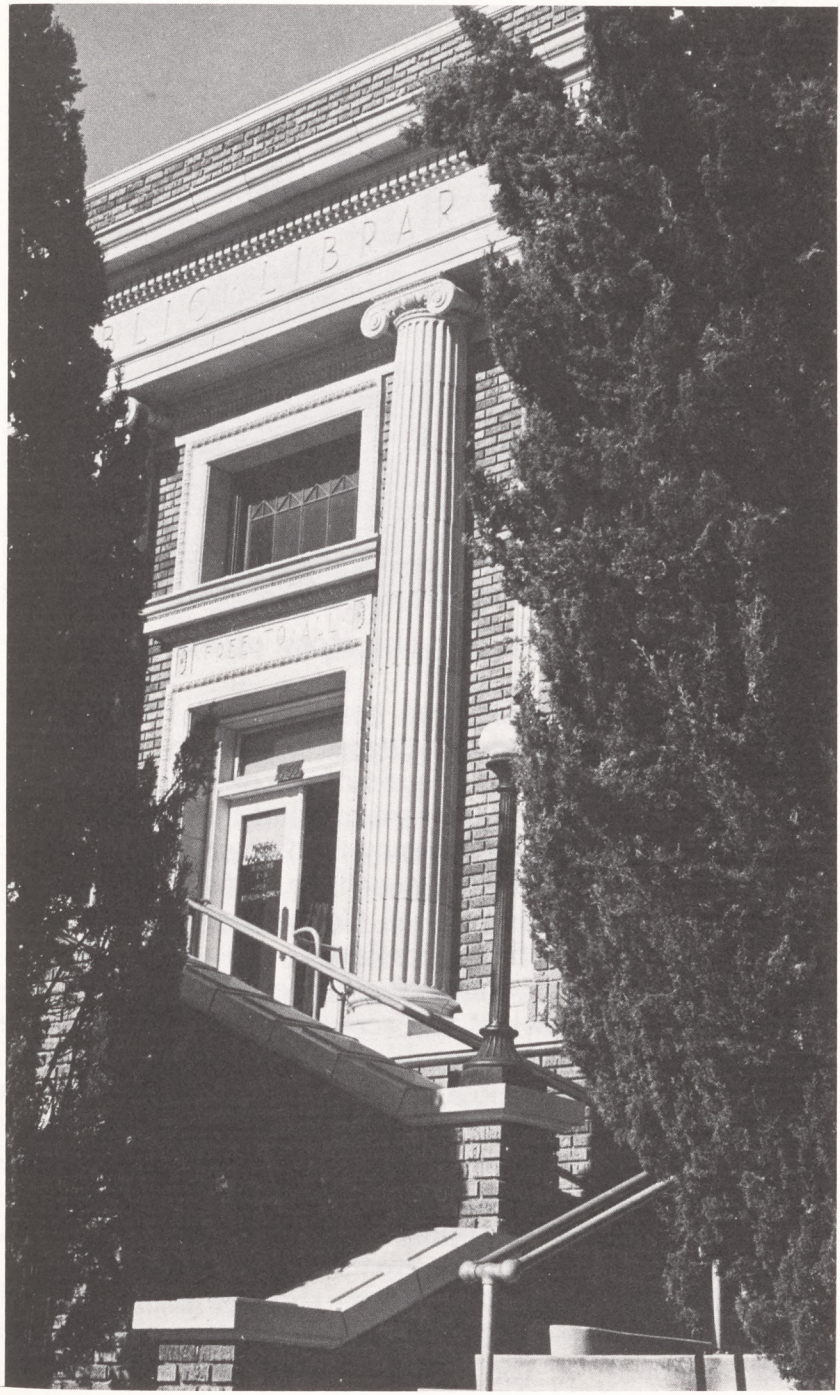
And whereas, a majority of the members of this Board have personally assured said donors that the City would properly and adequately furnish such new Library and City Hall, and secure funds for such purpose by the sale of the present City Hall site, or otherwise; now therefore, for the purpose of making a record of such understanding.

Be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees of the City of San Buenaventura, in the name of such city, hereby accepts Mr. and Mrs. Foster's offer, and undertakes to secure the funds to furnish and equip such by the sale of the present City Hall site, or otherwise, and to occupy such building as a Library and City Hall as soon as such building is completed.

Resolved further, that this Board will use its best efforts to secure the union of the City and County Libraries and have the same housed in such building, under arrangements to be hereafter made with the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County.

Resolved further, that the gratitude of the people of the City of San Buenaventura is hereby expressed to their friends, Mr. and Mrs. E.P. Foster, for their generous gift and public benefaction; and that a certified copy of this resolution be handed to said donors.

The year 1921 brought a new building and a new librarian. Miss Julia Steffa, County Librarian, went to Kings County, and Elizabeth Russell Topping took her place. Miss Topping had worked in libraries in Oregon, Washington and New York. When she came there were 25,000 books in the county system, when she left, 200,000. For nearly thirty years the story of library ser-



O'Hearn

Entrance to E. P. Foster Library

Mrs. Blanche Reynolds

vice in Ventura County is the story of Elizabeth Topping.

Elizabeth R. Topping was born in New York March 27, 1882. She received her degree in history at Cornell and became a teacher in Oregon of history and debate. It was during her three summers off that she began working at the Salem Public Library for 25¢ an hour and discovered a love greater than teaching. After one year of a two-year library program at Cornell, she accepted a cataloging job outside of Portland.

From 1912 to 1915 she directed a library in Marshfield, Oregon; but when the economy declined with the men off to war, the city could not keep the library open. With a friend she kept a needlecraft and gift shop. In 1918 she returned and completed her degree and eventually became Monterey County Librarian. In September 1921 Mr. Roussey, a Ventura County Supervisor, invited Miss Topping to visit Ventura County. She stayed the rest of her life.[29]

Blanche Reynolds, after whom the elementary school is named, was the County School Superintendent; and since so many of the libraries were in schools, Mrs.

Book-

mobile

Reynolds drove Miss Topping around the county. The new librarian quickly recognized the utility of the automobile and Ventura became the first county in California to have a bookmobile. Miss Topping wrote numerous articles for professional library and education journals on the value of bookmobile service.[30] Interestingly, she could not drive when she came to Ventura; and it was Blanche Reynolds who taught her. The bookmobile made regular stops at schools, ranches, and labor camps for migrant workers. During the depression the library ran a WPA project employing 35 workers to provide visual aids for the schools.

Budget problems are nothing new either. The July 7, 1932 *Star* reported a 25 percent cut in salaries for library employees, and citizens held a pie sale for money to buy new books. "Those girls should be willing to work for less," a supervisor was quoted telling Miss Topping. The next day's *Star* reported a 20 percent increase in circulation over the previous year. In 1933 the Citizen's Joint Taxation Report concluded that the County Librarian's salary was still too high and that it be lowered from $2,100 per year to $1,800.

In 1933 the city of Ventura moved its offices out of the Foster Library; and except for a room used by the Chamber of Commerce, the library had the entire building.

Elizabeth Russell Topping

To Soroptimists

Many members of our armed forces now overseas have reason to be thankful for the fine work you are doing in obtaining good books for ships' libraries—for reading en route to "Island X." A friend told me you collected some 350 books at a tea last Sunday. which means a great deal of good reading material for our outbound fighters. Keep up the good work.

Star-

Free

Press

PA VENTURA.

* * *

During World War II, the County Librarian had charge of all books for military personnel stationed at Seaside Park, maintaining a reading room there. Miss Topping also worked to provide books for overseas use and on board ships. They were not bought with county funds, but from money Miss Topping personally collected from service clubs and individuals. The Ventura Library was one of three suppliers of books on the West Coast.

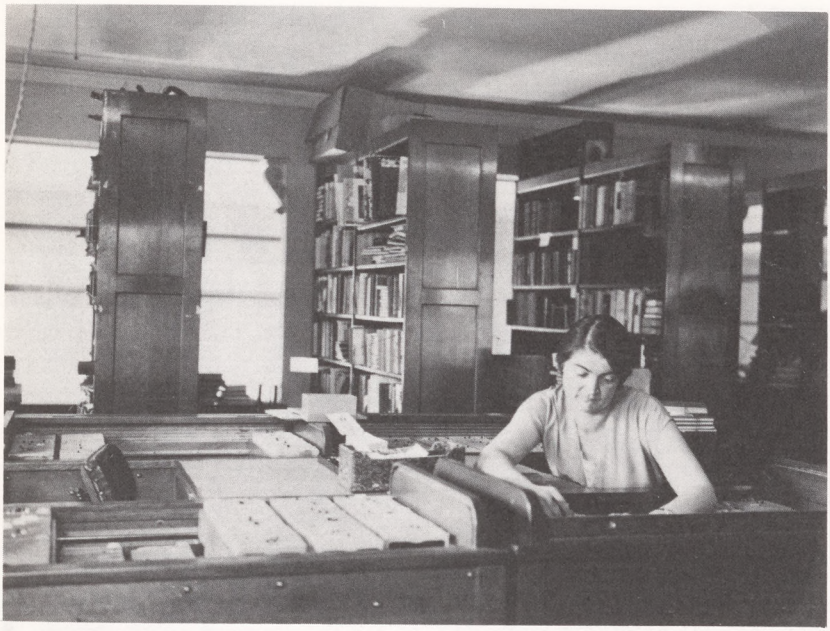
When a ship was preparing to leave, the chaplain or recreation officer would come in a jeep to get the books. One time Miss Topping bought $400.00 worth of books for a ship that was leaving in a hurry with no money earmarked for the purpose. The Soroptimists paid the bill. These books, of course, were expendable; and none of them ever came back.[31]

One day on officer came in to see her. He had made the discovery that some of his men were illiterate. He reported that some of the men had apparently ignored a sign which read, "do not proceed beyond this point," and subsequently discovered they had been unable to read it. He needed books for use in teaching them to read which had to be written on the primary level but at an adult interest level. Miss Topping had a most difficult time finding any since at that time there were almost no such books.[32] Another time a chaplain came to her with an unusual problem; he had no Bible. Miss Topping discovered that local bookstores were all out of Bibles except for one, a beautiful edition costing fourteen dollars, a fortune for a book in those days. The Soroptimists again came to the rescue and paid for the purchase.[33]

New headquarters

The sailors were also provided with phonograph records. Often they would spend an entire afternoon off in some cubbyhole at the library listening to records. The librarian received many letters from men overseas expressing their gratitude. The Navy also officially acknowledged their outstanding service during war time.[34]

Miss Topping not only begged books and money, but she begged cookies of the library staff, who served refreshments nearly every night in the reading room. Sometimes there were no cookies, but never no coffee. Of course there was a comical aspect. Miss Topping recalled a time she was summoned to the courthouse to explain an electric bill for the Seaside Reading Room of over $100.00. She was at a loss; then she and the commanding officer went over the Seaside area carefully. Some ingenious man had hitched up a trailer to the library light circuit.[35]



Mrs. Mildred Spiller

For 29 years Elizabeth Topping served as County Librarian, retiring January 1, 1950. At first the Board of Supervisors ordered an open test for the vacant position; but after editorial opposition from the *Star-Free Press,* the board reversed itself and ordered a promotional examination which as the *Star* pointed out, "narrows the possible selection of Librarian to Mildred Spiller."[36]

Mrs. Spiller was appointed March 1, 1950 and served until January 1, 1961. She started working in 1926 as circulation and reference librarian, and had a 26 year career with the Ventura County Library, during which time the system added 122,053 volumes, and circulation grew to 544,536.[37] Mrs. Spiller was also a great builder. She directed the construction of the new headquarters building in 1959, as well as one at Fillmore in 1955 and Port Hueneme in 1960. The Ojai building was deeded to the county and plans were in the works for the Camarillo building on Ventura Boulevard and the Thousand Oaks building on Wilbur Road before her retirement.

Catherine Chadwick with Miss Topping and Mrs. Spiller

In December 1961 Mrs. Spiller was succeeded by Catherine Chadwick who formerly had worked in Kern County and as Extension Librarian for the Arizona State Library. After having been on the road for six years, she came to Ventura thinking it a quiet town. Instead, Mrs. Chadwick arrived with the wave of growth that accompanied the land boom in California. It was with the resulting increase in the tax base that substantially improved library service reached the communities of the county. During their tenure the budget rose every year. Along with increased money every year, there came increased professionalism, as the branches came to be staffed by librarians with master's degrees. Before the time of Mrs. Chadwick, only the headquarters librarians had professional degrees.[38]

There was also an increase in library cooperation. The Black Gold Cooperative Library System, composed of public libraries in the Tri-County area, was established in 1964. This idea of Mrs. Chadwick's of active and economical sharing of library resources became a reality with publication of a union catalog of books; the system linked together by Telex communication, frequent van delivery, and a strong reference service program. This public library cooperative effort expanded to TIE (Total Interlibrary Exchange) providing similiar service to other types of libraries in the region in 1970.[39]

FOOTNOTES

1. Doyce Blackman Nunis, *Books in their sea chests: Reading along the California coast*, 23.
2. Msgr. Francis J. Weber, "The Biblioteca Sancti Bonaventurae", in the Summer 1976 *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly, XXI*, 7-9.
3. Herbert F. Ricard, *Ventura's public library*, 2.
4. Fray Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Buenaventura: the mission by the sea*, 63.
5. *Ibid.*, 65.
6. *Idem.*

7. J. M. Guinn, *Historical and biographical record of Southern California,* 177.

8. Yda Storke, *History of Ventura County,* 231-232.

9. Sol Sheridan, *History of Ventura County,* I, 178.

10. J. F. Newby, Letter to Board of Library Trustees, *Minutes of the Board of Trustees,* February 19, 1885 and January 17, 1888.

11. *Ibid. Minutes of the library board,* 1874.

12. Harriet G. Eddy, *County free library organizing in California: 1909 - 1918,* 9.

13. *Ibid.,* 74-5.

14. *Ibid.,* 76.

15. *Ibid.,* 77.

16. *Ibid.,* 76.

17. *Ibid.,* 77-8.

18. *Minutes of the Board of Supervisors,* April 8, 1915.

19. *Ibid.,* April 9, 1915.

20. "Supervisors grant county free library", *Ventura Free Press,* April 16, 1915, 1.

21. Julia Steffa, Letter to the Board of Supervisors, September 30, 1916.

22. Elizabeth R. Topping, *History of the Ventura free library,* 1.

23. *Free Public Library.*

24. Julia Steffa, *Op. cit.,* December 31, 1916.

25. *Ibid.,* July 30, 1917.

26. "County Library Carries no Pro-German books" (Mounted clipping dated December 1917).

27. "Library-City Hall to be gift outright"; "Ventura to Have A $75,000 library"; "Foster to give building to Ventura" and "New City Hall for Ventura is plan" (Mounted clippings dated September 1918 - October 1919).

28. "Hold up new County Library here"; "Trustees will meet with supervisors about library" and "City, county get together on new plan of library" (Mounted clippings dated January 1920).

29. Elizabeth R. Topping and Ada Simpson, *Elizabeth Russell Topping,* 1 - 6.

30. *Ibid.,* 8.

31. *Ibid.,* 12.

32. *Idem.*

33. *Idem.*

34. *Idem.*

35. *Ibid.,* 13.

36. "Reconsideration in order", *Ventura County Star-Free Press,* December 30, 1949; "Board selects promotional exam for library postion", *Ventura County Star-Free Press,* December 28, 1949.

37. *Ventura County Free Library Annual report,* 1961 - 1962.

38. Interview with Catherine Chadwick, November 1981.

39. *Idem.*

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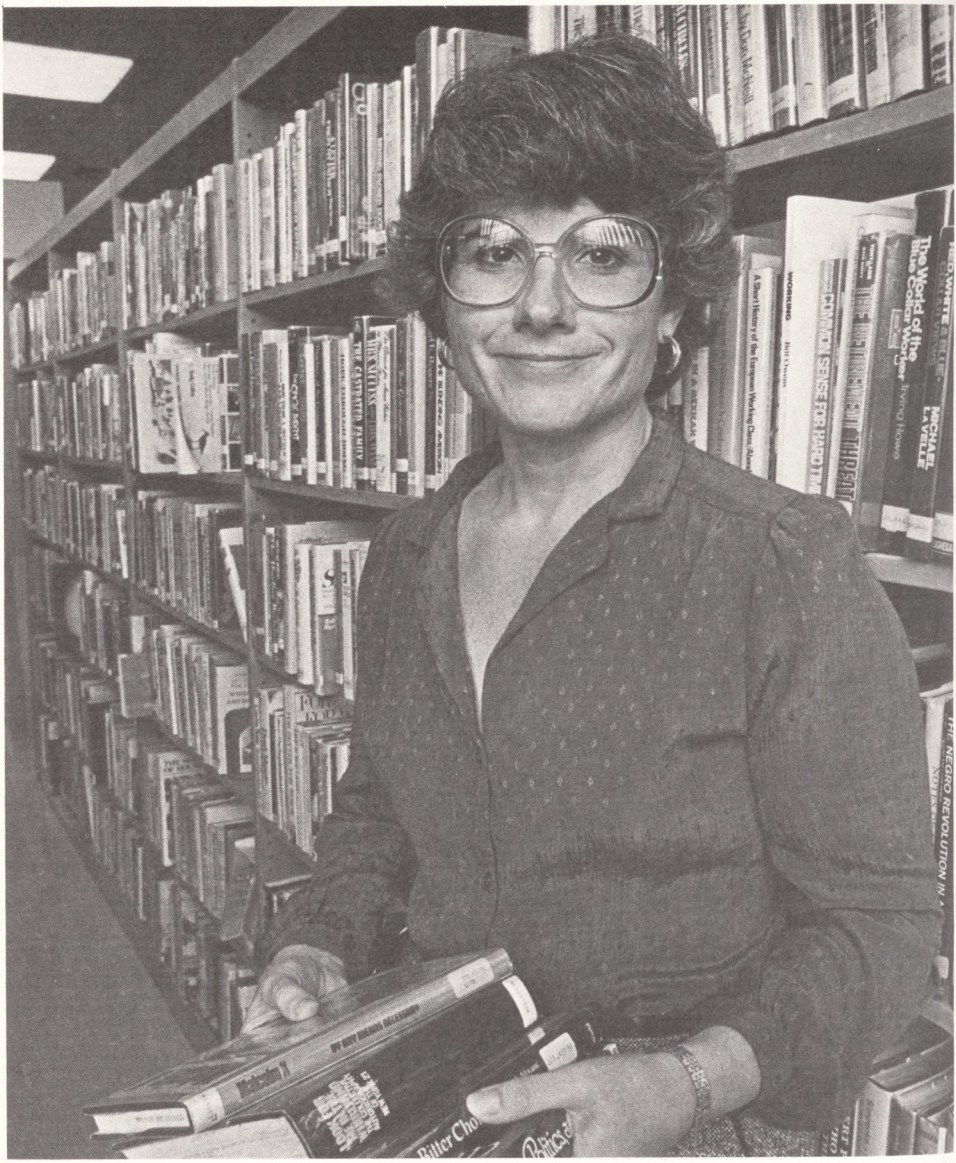

Dixie Adeniran
Ventura County Librarian

1983 marks the beginning of the second hundred years of public library service in Ventura. Change is the one certainty in the future. Planning for a growing population, whose makeup is changing, is required. Rapid advances in the methods of printing and of securing information will provide resources to libraries. The computer has already arrived on the scene. The book is basic, but information in other formats and delivered through new techniques is a solid promise for the future. D.A.

Abram Lincoln Hobson

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly

Vol. XXVIII
No. 3

Spring
1983

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The
Ventura County Historical Society
Quarterly

Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 Spring 1983

Grant W. Heil, Editor

The *Quarterly* is published from the Society's headquarters. The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or opinions by authors of the articles. Grant W. Heil is Editor and the Staff includes Robert O. Browne, Paul Clodi, Miriam Dudley, Roy Eisele, Charles H. Heil, David W. Hill, Danilo Matteini, Johanna D. Overby, Austin B. Perley, Ynez Rodriquez, Tom Roe, Patricia A. Sales, Richard D. Willett and Helen Wright.

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By Eugene D. Wheeler and Robert E. Kallman

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By Fergus L. Fairbanks

Notice

The article on the Hobsons is a chapter from a book by the authors. Ted Fairbanks made this speech on our Congressmen in 1945. The portraits were drawn by Danilo Matteini.

INNOVATIVE COASTAL RANCHERS
Hobson Brothers

By Eugene D. Wheeler and Robert E. Kallman

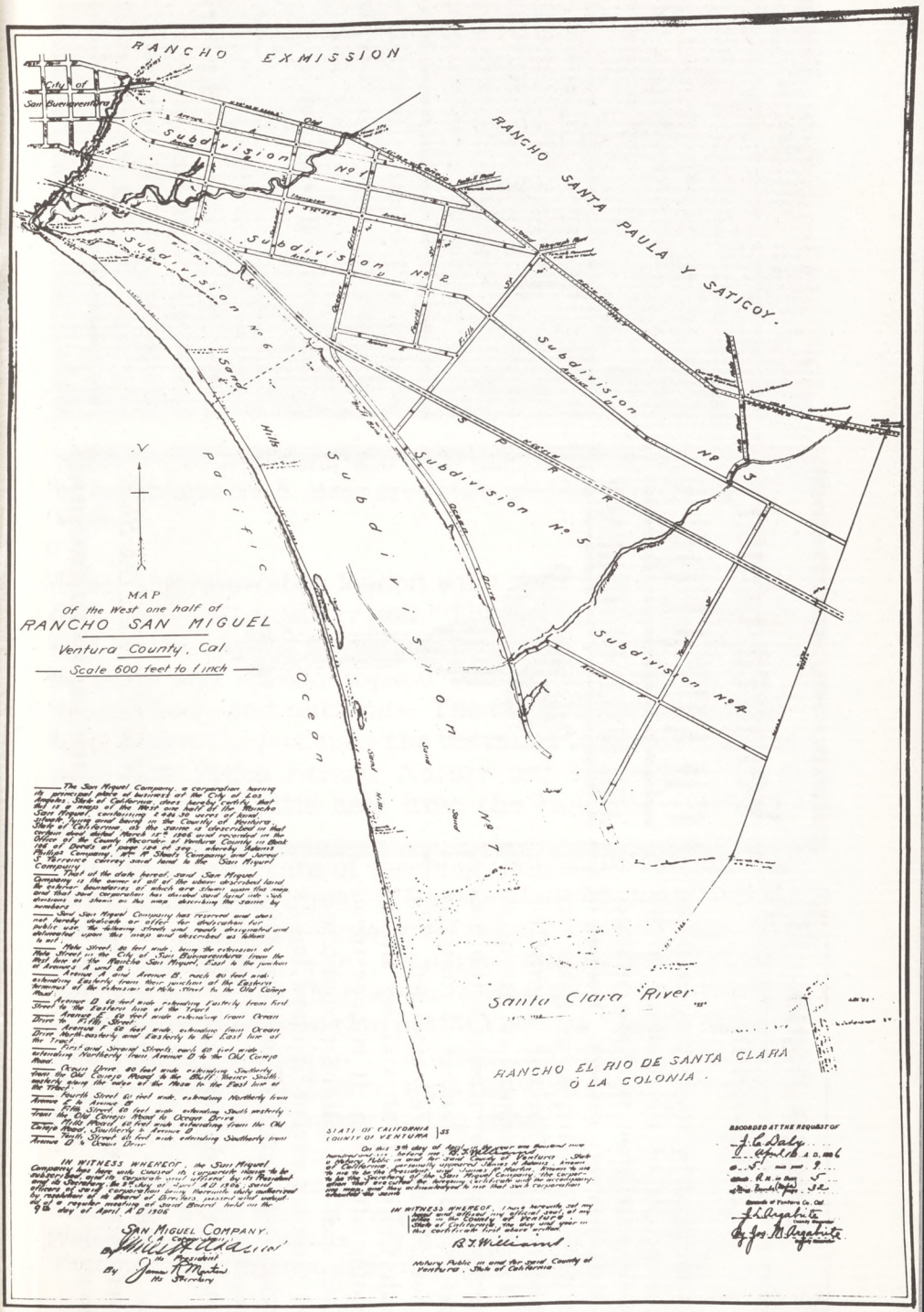
COASTAL LAND UTILIZATION

Newly arrived farmers to the Ventura and Santa Barbara Basin soon realized they lived in a stormy environment. In the winter storms of 1874-75, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties were inundated with water. During one week in January of 1875, 9.32 inches of rain fell in Ventura and an estimated 10 inches fell in 24 hours in Ojai. Similar downpours occurred in 1883-84, 1889-90 and every few years along the coast.[1] Two brothers, William and Abram Hobson, sons of the early Ventura pioner W.D. Hobson, observed over the years that these heavy rainfalls carried thousands of cubic yards of fertile soil down the barrancas and into the sea: a waste of a valuable resource.

Noting that the sandy beaches were of no interest to Ventura farmers and had little value, around 1900 the Hobson brothers bought 550 acres of beach land in the Pierpont Bay area in Ventura. Their purchase included the land between the Santa Clara River and San Pedro Street, and from the high Vista del Mar bluff to a line a short distance back from the sea. The property ranged from one-third to one-half mile in width and was over two miles in length.

About 1905 the Hobsons constructed a weir near the mouth of the Arundell Barranca designed to divert water right and left over their sandy, marshy land. When it rained, the Hobsons adjusted their dam to

1. See "Wet and dry years" by R. G. Percy in the Summer 1971 *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly* (XVI, *4,* 13-25).



The San Miguel Company, a corporation having its principal place of business at the City of Los Angeles, State of California, does hereby certify that that is a map of the West one half of the Rancho San Miguel containing 4,424.30 acres of land situate, lying and being in the County of Ventura, State of California as the same is described in that certain deed dated March 4 to 1904 and recorded in the Office of the County Recorder of Ventura County in Book 148 of Deeds at page 124 et seq. whereby Adams & Fletcher Company, as A.P. Stone's Company and Clarence Carney said land to the San Miguel Company.

That of the said parcel said San Miguel Company is the owner of all of the above described land by either boundaries of which are shown upon the map and that said corporation has divided said land into lots and streets as shown on this map describing the same by numbers.

Said San Miguel Company has reserved and does not hereby dedicate nor offer the dedication for public use the following streets and roads designated and delineated upon this map and described as follows to wit:

Mobe Street, 80 feet wide, being the extension of Mobe Street in the City of San Buenaventura from the West line of the Rancho San Miguel, East to the junction of Avenues A and B.

Avenue A and Avenue B, each 80 feet wide, extending Easterly from their junction at the Eastern terminus of the extension of Mobe Street to the Old Camino Real.

Avenue C, 80 feet wide, extending Easterly from First Street to the Eastern line of the Tract.

Avenue D, 80 feet wide extending from Ocean Drive to Fifth Street.

Avenue E, 80 feet wide extending from Ocean Drive North-easterly and East to the East line of the Tract.

First and Second Streets, each 80 feet wide, extending Northerly from Avenue D to the Old Camino Real.

Ocean Drive, 80 feet wide, extending Southerly from the Old Camino Real to the Bluff Shore South-easterly along the edge of the Mesa to the East line of the Tract.

Fourth Street, 80 feet wide, extending Northerly from Avenue C to Avenue D.

Fifth Street, 80 feet wide extending South-westerly from the Old Camino Real to Ocean Drive.

Mobe Road, 80 feet wide, extending from the Old Camino Real, Southerly to Avenue D.

Fourth Street, 80 feet wide extending Southerly from Avenue D to Ocean Drive.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the San Miguel Company has here unto caused its corporate name to be subscribed and its corporate seal affixed by its President and its Secretary, the 9th day of April A.D. 1906, said officers of said Corporation being thereunto duly authorized by resolution of its Board of Directors passed and adopted at a regular meeting of said Board held on the 9th day of April A.D. 1906.

SAN MIGUEL COMPANY.
By [illegible] its President.
By James R. Martin its Secretary.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA } ss
COUNTY OF VENTURA }

On this 9th day of April A.D. 1906 before me personally appeared [illegible] known to me to be the President and [illegible] known to me to be the Secretary of the San Miguel Company, the corporation that executed the foregoing Certificate and acknowledged to me that such corporation executed the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal at my office in the County of Ventura, State of California, the day and year in this certificate first above written.

R.T. Williams
Notary Public in and for said County of Ventura, State of California.

RECORDED AT THE REQUEST OF
J. L. Daly
April 18 A.D. 1906
at [illegible] min past [illegible]
Book R. M. in Page 5
Abstract Book Page 32
Records of Ventura Co. Cal.
J. L. Argabrite
County Recorder
By Jos. M. Argabrite
Deputy

Chautauqua Program

FOREWORD

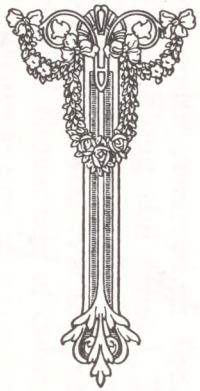
Encouraged by the hearty response of the people of the County in this splendid enterprise we have enlarged our plans in every respect. Instead of four days Chautauqua program we have seven days. The same high standard of quality is maintained, but many important topics by master authorities are added. Also a number of attractive and novel features are introduced. The Health Culture Club will be an exhilarating attraction. It is open to all without cost. It will meet from 6 to 7 every morning except Sundays and its exercises will consist of lectures, demonstrations and practice in physical culture, beach trips and bathing.

In addition to these fine improvements in entertainment we can announce great progress in the conveniences for our patrons. The splendid auditorium will seat 1,000 people in comfort. We have bought our own equipment for the Tent City and can guarantee everything to be new and first class. The smallest tents offered for rent will have four foot side walls and sevent foot centers, the larger tents in proportion. The double beds will be full width (4 feet), the single ones two and one-half feet. These without change in the generous price list of last year. A fully equipped Cafeteria well housed in a new building will furnish the best of meals at moderate rates and conduct a refreshment counter, at which bakery goods and cooked food will be available.

A line of automobiles will be operated between the Plaza and the Pavilion, running every ten minutes for an hour preceeding and following each program and carrying passengers at ten cents per ride.

Ventura County CHAUTAUQUA

AND BIBLE CONFERENCE



VENTURA-BY-THE-SEA

Between 1909 and World War I the Chautaqua annually appeared on Subdivision No. 6. Many spectators camped on the sand for the week.

direct the rainwater, loaded with rich topsoil, to spread over their salty, sandy soil.[2] This action rinsed out the salt in the sand with rainwater, filled the low marshy sections and spread topsoil over their land, giving it needed body and nutrients. The top soil varied in depth from about six feet near the barranca to only six inches near San Pedro Street. Nature did the work free of charge with a little help from the Hobsons' ingenious weir design.

After a few years of leaching, sufficient top soil had been spread over about 475 acres of usable land; and the Hobsons planted a variety of crops, including oats, hay, sugar beets, lima beans, tomatoes and lettuce. The land became so fertile that when it was sold a half century later for the construction of the Ventura "Keys" Marina and housing development in 1963, it had the highest production of lettuce (528 cartons per acre) recorded on any land in Ventura County at the time.

2. "I just made 50 acres of good land on the Thompson property during the heavy rains of the past week" said Will Hobson. "The Hobson family of Ventura" by R. G. Percy in the February 1968 *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly* (XIII, *2,* 26).

Pier and bathhouse at Pierpont Bay in 1928.

To prevent damage from the Santa Clara River's meandering and flooding every year before the rainy season, the farm manager took a team of horses and cleared an opening at its mouth. The waves built up large sandy dunes there when the river was not flowing. When it rained, the stream took the path of least resistence through the cleared opening, making the channel deeper and wider at that point. The Hobsons' preventive action kept the river in a desired location on its way to the ocean and saved their land from harmful flooding and erosion.

PIERPONT BAY URBANIZATION'S CONFLICT WITH NATURAL FORCES

In 1928 a mile long stretch of beach front land, between the Hobson's property and the sea, was sold to developer Frank Meline and subdivided. Lots sold as high as $2,900 in 1928 and 1929. A few months after the stock market crash in 1929, the same property was released for only $10 per lot. Later the price would rise between $150 and $300. Only about 50 houses were built on the beach subdivision before the Wall Street crash in 1929.

Several homes were lost to channel seas and storms between 1929 and 1940. Two fierce storms in 1936 sent huge waves roaring across the flat Pierpont Bay area to the bluffs of Vista del Mar near Seaward Avenue, the coast line years before.[3] A large section of the ocean front land in the subdivision, about 150 yards in depth including Ocean Drive, disappeared from erosion during the winter storms. The pier and the bath house at the foot of Seaward Avenue and several houses were also

3. "When I first came to Ventura, I lived on the waterfront. I was a bachelor then, and three of us were together in the Pierpont. We agreed that if one got married, the other two would move out. Houses were hard to find in Ventura. John Hazzard became the lucky benedict; but one night in March of 1936, he telephoned me, "You know that house you let me have? Come down and help me! The ocean is coming in the front door and going out the back." *E. Otis Draper.*

THE PIERPONT BEFORE 1936

Boardwalk behind the strand in The Pierpont.

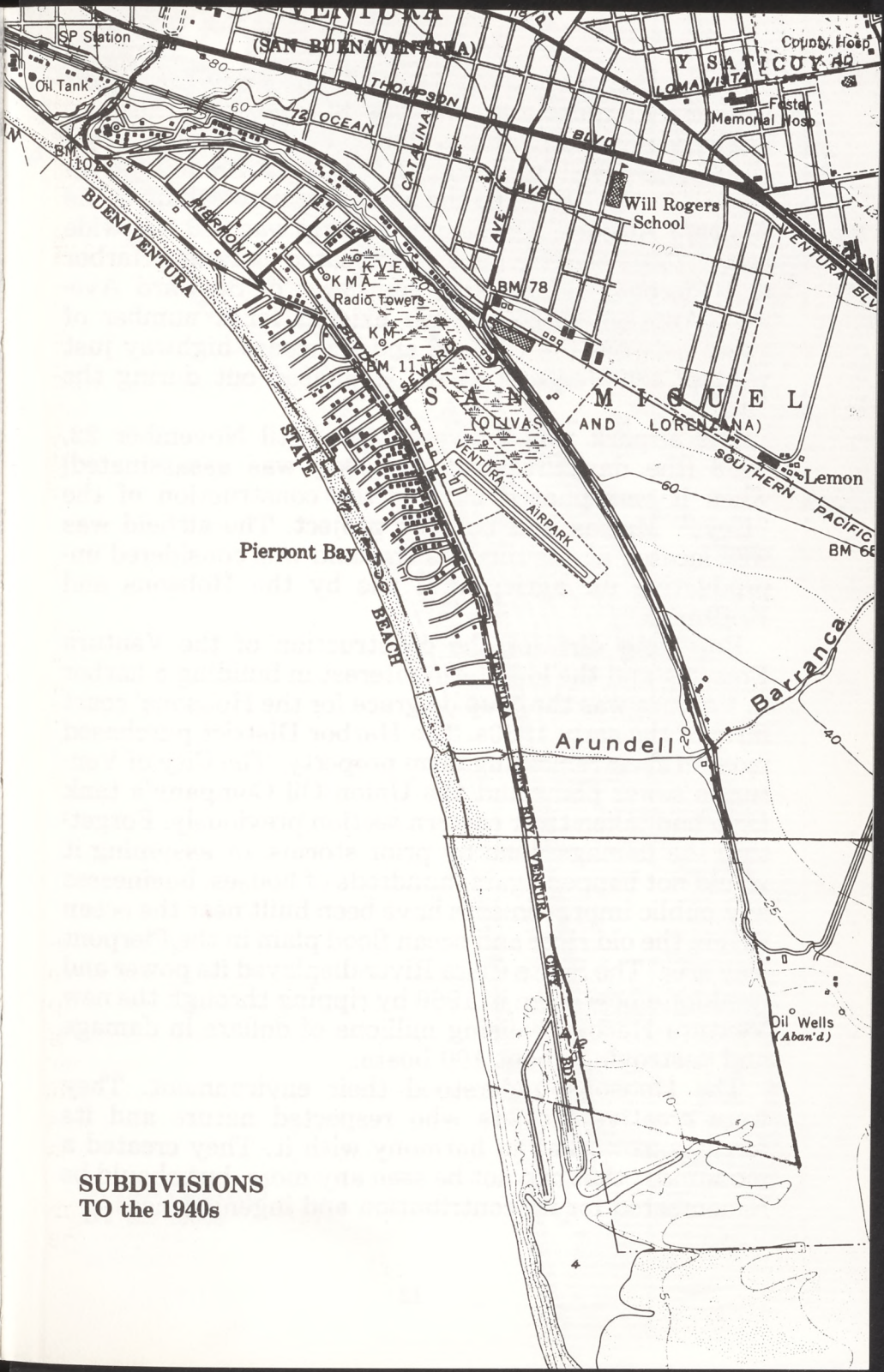
lost to the storms. No additional houses were built in the Pierpont Bay area for nearly 17 years.

The low-lying, subdivided land northwest of San Pedro Street never had more that three or four houses built on it before it was sold to the State of California and developed into a park in the 1960s. The Division of Highways took part of the subdivision and the northwest section of the Hobson land. In 1960 the state started construction of the Ventura Freeway. Urbanization was closing in on the coastal farmland.

PIERPONT BAY AIRPORT

With America's entry into the first World War, interest in aviation evolved quickly, especially in southern California. In Ventura local pilots started using a strip of the Hobsons' marginal farmland informally during the war and afterward. Former wartime pilots flew their old "Jenney's" and other aircraft from the makeshift dirt strip during the 1920s and 1930s. The airstrip was just southeast of Seaward Avenue where the freeway is now located.

Walter Hoffman, grandson of Will Hobson, remembers being thrilled as a young boy at watching the



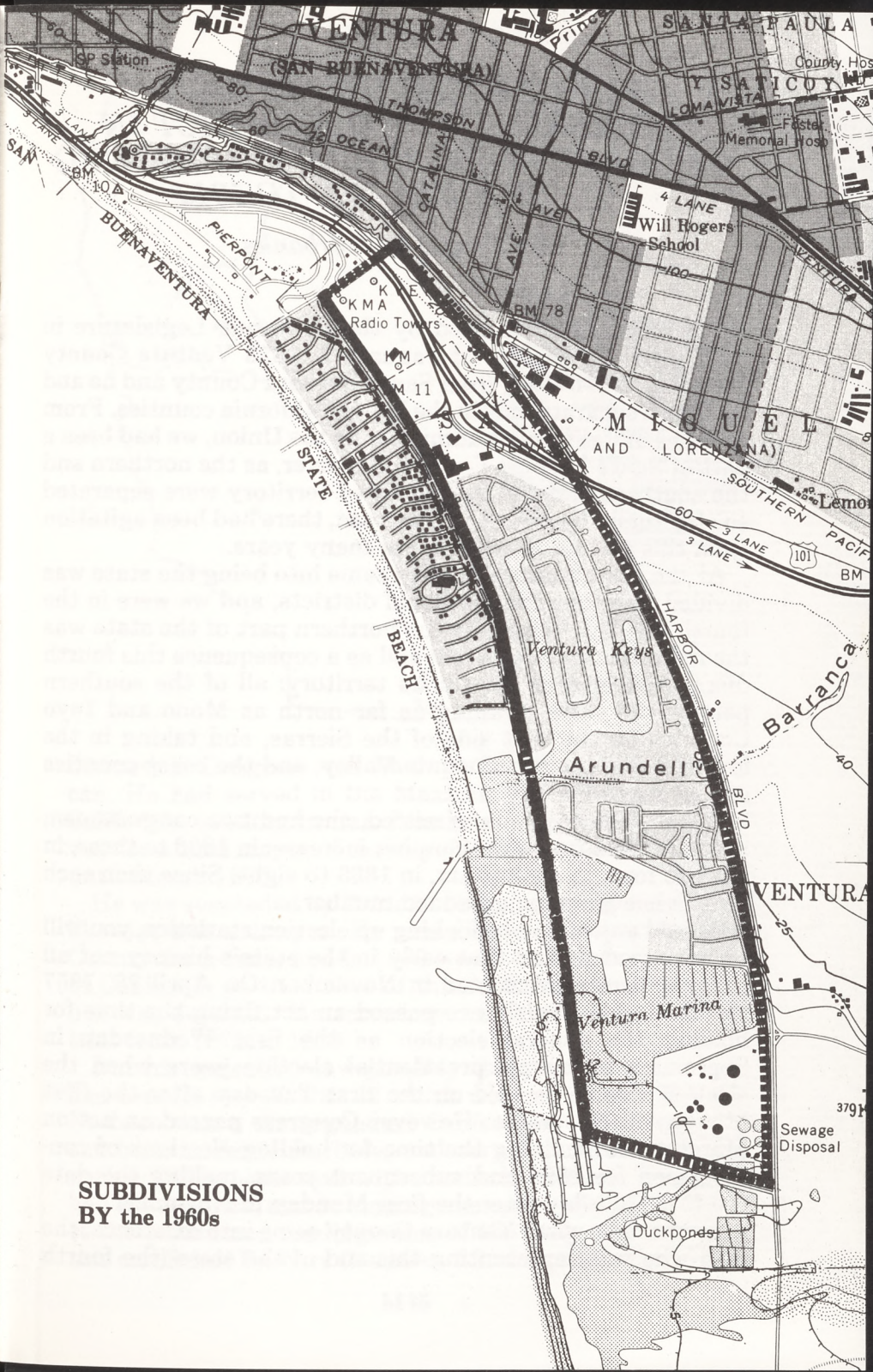
SUBDIVISIONS
TO the 1940s

military airplanes of the 1930s landing and taking off from the Pierpont strip. He was an aviation enthusiast, later becoming a pilot and flying his own airplane from the field. After World War II Walter Hoffman built an airport in 1947 close to the same location, calling it the Ventura Airpark. The improved strip was 300 feet wide and 2,250 feet long; and was located between Harbor and Pierpont Boulevards, southeast of Seaward Avenue. Another small airstrip existed for a number of years between the railroad and the coast highway just west of the Ventura River. It phased out during the 1940s.

The airpark was actively used until November 22, 1963 (the day President Kennedy was assassinated) when it was phased out for the construction of the "Keys" Marina and housing project. The airfield was well located at the time, as the land was considered unproductive for agricultural use by the Hobsons and Hoffmans.

Providing dirt for the construction of the Ventura Freeway and the long term interest in building a harbor in Ventura was the coup de grace for the Hobsons' coast farm in the early 1960s. The Harbor District purchased most of their remaining farm property. The City of Ventura's sewer plant and the Union Oil Company's tank farm had taken their eastern section previously. Forgetting the damage done by prior storms, or assuming it would not happen again, hundreds of houses, businesses and public improvements have been built near the ocean within the old river and ocean flood plain in the Pierpont Bay area. The Santa Clara River displayed its power and need for elbow room in 1969 by ripping through the new Ventura Harbor, causing millions of dollars in damage and destroying about 100 boats.

The Hobsons understood their environment. They were creative farmers who respected nature and its forces and worked in harmony with it. They created a monument that can not be seen any more, but should be remembered for its contribution and ingeniousness.



SUBDIVISIONS BY the 1960s

CONGRESSMEN WHO HAVE REPRESENTED THE DISTRICT IN WHICH VENTURA COUNTY HAPPENED TO BE FROM 1873 TO 1946

By Fergus L. Fairbanks

The enabling act passed by the California Legislature in 1872 provided that as of January 1, 1873 Ventura County should be taken away from Santa Barbara County and be and become a separate unit in the list of California counties. From the time of California's admission to the Union, we had been a part of Santa Barbara County. However, as the northern and the southern ends of the combined territory were separated so effectually by mountains and sea, there had been agitation from this end for a division, for many years.

At the time Ventura County came into being the state was divided into four congressional districts, and we were in the fourth district. Originally the northern part of the state was the more thickly populated; and as a consequence this fourth district covered an enormous territory: all of the southern part of the state, running as far north as Mono and Inyo Counties on the east side of the Sierras, and taking in the lower half of the San Joaquin Valley, and the coast counties almost up to the bay.

When California was admitted, she had two congressmen; but each census saw the number increase: in 1863 to three, in 1873 to four, in 1883 to six, in 1893 to eight. Since then each census has given us an added number.

Should any of you be looking up election statistics, you will be surprised to find that early in the state's history not all congressmen were elected in November. On April 26, 1857 the California Legislature passed an act fixing the time for holding the general election as the first Wednesday in September except in presidential election years when the election was to be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. However Congress passed an act on March 3, 1873, fixing the time for holding elections of congressmen for 1876 and subsequent years, making the date the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

At the time when Ventura County came into existence, the man who was representing this end of the state (the fourth

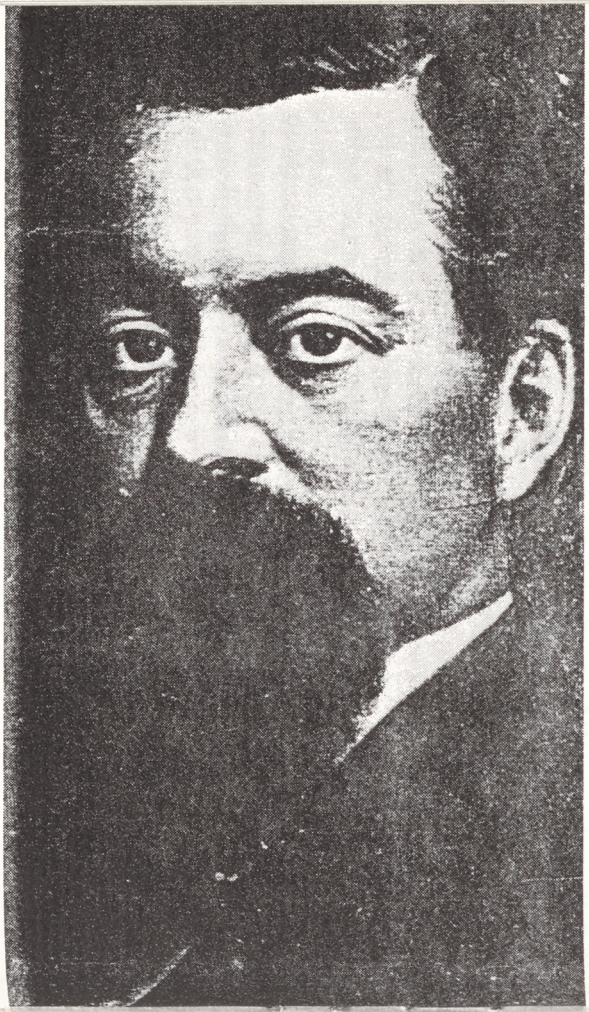
4th District
Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Monterey, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Tulare and Ventura Counties.

1872

district) in Congress was Sherman O. Houghton, a Republican. He had served in the Mexican War and later came to California, settling in San Jose where he practised law and was for a time mayor of the city. He was reelected and served until March 1875.

He was succeeded by Peter D. Wigginton, a Democrat, who likewise was a lawyer. He was district attorney in Merced County for a time; and in 1866 was a candidate for governor of California on the ticket of the California American party, but was defeated. He served as congressman from this district from 1875 to 1879.

But his reelection saw possibly the greatest contest there has been in any district of which we were a part. Romualdo Pacheco was a distinguished Californian, a Spanish-American born in Santa Barbara, and very popular among all the native Californians and with the early settlers. However he had his enemies; and in looking over some of the newspapers of the period and reading some of the early day histories of this and Santa Barbara Counties, I find that his enemies called



Governor
Romualdo
Pacheco

Reginaldo
Francisco
Del Valle

him many names . . . The campaign was bitter. Pacheco was elected over Wigginton by one vote. The Secretary of State refused to issue him a certificate of election until Pacheco secured a Writ of Mandate. He then went to Washington, was sworn in and was the acting representative until Congress met in the following December. Wigginton filed a contest; and as Congress was heavily Democratic, he was declared elected, Pacheco was unseated and went home.

However he had his revenge the following year when the two men again were the candidates of their respective parties. Pacheco was elected, and two years later was reelected. Pacheco had a long and distinguished career. He was a sailor, farmer, politician, diplomat. He was twice elected to the California State Senate, twice to the Assembly; was county judge of Santa Barbara County from 1855 to 1859, was state treasurer from 1863 to 1866, lieutenant governor from 1871 to 1875; and became governor of the state when Newton Booth, then governor, was elected to the United States Senate. Later he was named as United States minister to Guatemala by President Benjamin Harrison. It is interesting to note that the *Ventura Signal* opposed Wigginton in 1874 but supported him in 1876.

Pacheco was followed by Pleasant B. Tully, whose home was in Gilroy. At one time he was a miner in California, later studied law and was admitted to practice, following in the footsteps of many others of the state's distinguished attorneys. He was elected as a Democrat, and served from 1883 to 1885.

The next two men to contest for the honor of representing the district in Congress were ones who played an important part in the state's history. Reginaldo F. Del Valle, a scion of one of the oldest of early day California families, their family home being at Camulos in this county, being well and widely known, was nominated by the Democrats. Henry H. Markham, who was later elected governor of the state in 1891, was nominated by the Republicans. Markham was elected by the slender majority of 407 votes. He was the first representative from the new sixth district. He was born in New York State, served in the Union Army, later being admitted to the bar. He first practised law in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; but shortly removed to California, settling in Pasadena. He served only one term in Congress, from 1885 to 1887.

Wiliam Vandever, the next representative in Congress from the sixth district, was the first Ventura County man to

6th District
Alpine, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Monterey, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura Counties.
1883

be elected to our national legislature. He was born in Baltimore in 1817, moved to Illinois in 1839, and to Iowa in 1851. He was admitted to the bar in 1852. He was elected to the 36th and the 37th Congresses from Iowa. He served through the sectional War Between the States, eventually becoming a major-general. Vandever came to Ventura in 1884, and shortly became a prominent figure in Republican party councils. He was elected to the 50th and the 51st congresses, serving this district from 1887 to 1891. General Vandever died in Ventura in 1893. His daughter, Florence Vandever, was librarian for many years when the library was on the corner where the Ventura Hotel now stands.

The next congressman was William W. Bowers, who was born in New York State in 1834, went to Wisconsin in 1852, later entered the Union Army as a private. He moved to San Diego in 1869 and soon became prominent in Republican party affairs, was elected to the California Legislature and was appointed collector of customs at San Diego from 1874 to 1882. Bowers was elected to the 52nd, 53rd and 54th Con-

General William Vandever

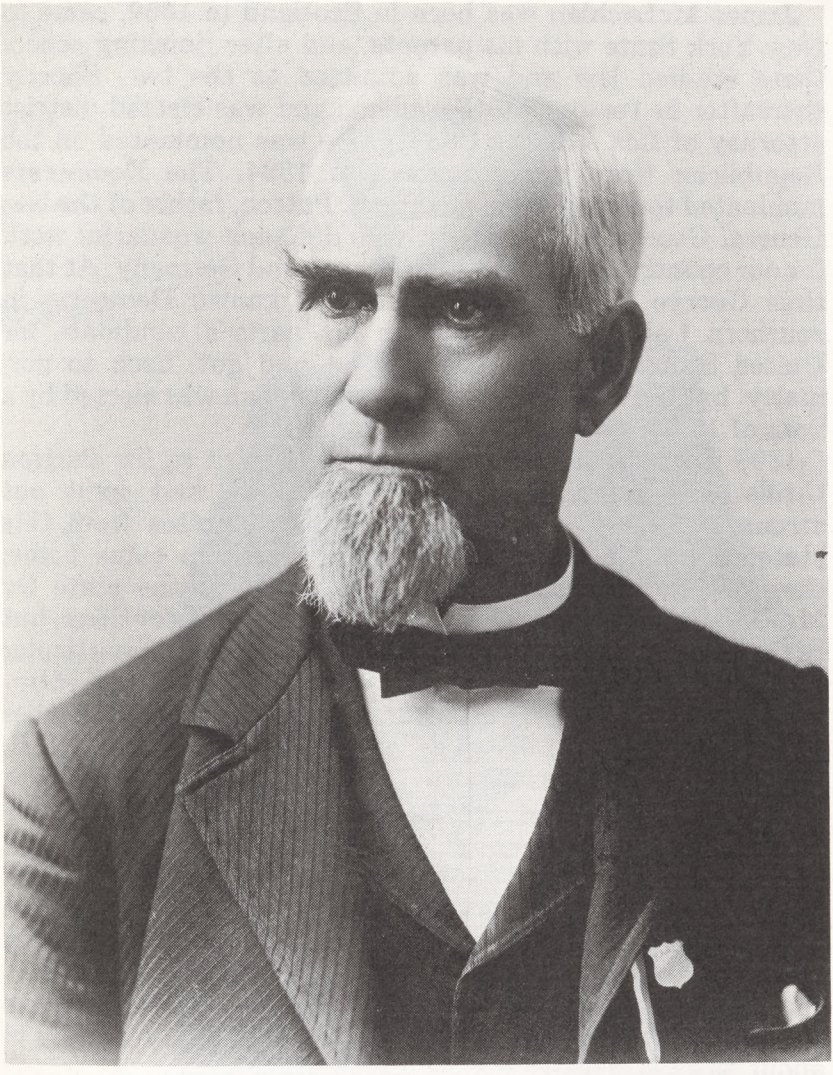
gresses, serving from our district, however, only during the period from 1891 to 1893. He was again appointed collector of customs at San Diego in 1898, and again in 1902. The San Diego Public Library writes me, "He married a relative of 'Father Horton,' the founder of modern San Diego" and figures prominently in all San Diego history of the period.

About this time came the great Populist uprising, one of the important political phenomena of the United States, which many of the old-timers of the county remember. Ventura County was the seething center of it, as we had their

6th District
Los Angeles, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Ventura Counties.
1891

greatest California leader living here, Marion Cannon. He was the father of Mrs. Russell Walker of the Mound District, and has many other descendants here. He was born in West Virginia in 1834, but early in his life removed to California, where he became a miner, continuing in that occupation for 21 years. He was elected the first state president of the Farmers Alliance of November 20, 1890, organized the Peoples Party of California in 1891, was chairman of the California delegation to the national convention of the Peoples Party in 1892. Cannon was nominated for Congress from the district by the Peoples Party and the Democrats, and was elected from this supposedly strong Republican district by a majority of 6,400 votes. Possibly the fact that the Republicans has been foolish enough to nominate Harvey Lindley, widely considered a tool of the Southern Pacific Railroad, played some small part in the result.

I was in high school in Ventura during this campaign in 1892; and we had some warm times there, as in those days every one became excited over political campaigns. Marion



Congressman Marion Cannon

Cannon's daughter was a student in the school at that time, as was a daughter of the chairman of the Republican County Central Committee; and as all of us heard enough at home to keep us well worked up, the school atmosphere at times became quite tense. One of my uncles, William S. Linn, lived in Ventura then. He had served in the Union Army, and had always been a strong Republican; but he was among those who joined in the defection from the Republicans. We heard much of the 'Crime of '73' during those days.

James McLachlan was born in Scotland in 1852, came to New York State with his parents, and after finishing school there studied law and was admitted to the bar. Shortly thereafter he removed to Pasadena, and was elected district attorney of Los Angeles County. He was nominated on the Republican ticket for Congress in 1894. The Democrats nominated to oppose him, George S. Patton, father of the late General George S. Patton, Jr. who did such wonderful work for our country and our allies in France and Germany. At that time George S. Patton was the best known Democrat in southern California, being once his party's candidate for United States senator. The district had got 'back to normalcy' by this time however, and McLachlan was elected by a vote of 18,146 to Patton's 11,693.

1896 was a year that old-timers look back to for election thrills. The Republican State Convention had come out strong for silver. However, when the delegates from this state to the Republican National Convention came home, they had to proceed to work hard to carry the state for McKinley on a gold platform. It was a bitter pill for them, but they did manage to carry the state. However this particular district 'kicked over the traces' on the congressional set-up.

Many of the older people of the county will remember Charles A. Barlow. He was a son-in-law of Mrs. H. R. McDonell, city treasurer of Ventura for many years; a brother-in-law of Charlie McDonell whose widow, Mrs. Myra McDonell, was prominent in Democratic party councils. Barlow was born in Ohio in 1858, but moved to Ventura in 1875. Later he lived in San Luis Obispo, and in Bakersfield. He was a farmer, newspaper publisher and later an oil man. He was prominent in the Peoples Party during their heyday; and as the Free Silver craze was still strong in the district, he was elected to Congress over James McLachlan by a majority of about 650 votes.

The next representative from the district was Russell J. Waters. He was born in Vermont in 1843, moved to Massachusetts where he received quite an extensive education, but for a short time took a job as a machinist. Shortly he was teaching school; and was professor of Latin, and also mathematics, in college. He moved to Illinois, was admitted to the bar; but left there soon for California, settling in Redlands. Waters was elected to Congress as a Republican, serving from 1899 to 1901. Later he moved to Los Angeles and became one of the city's prominent bankers, heading the

Mrs.

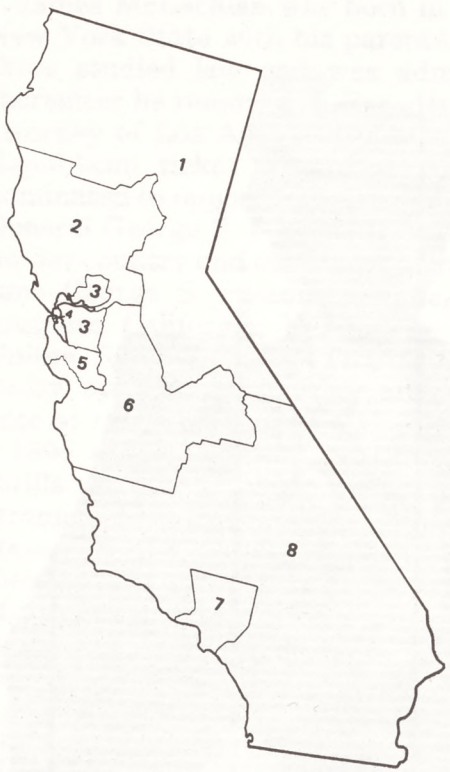
Myra

H.

McDonell

Citizens National Bank. Women readers may remember Mrs. Waters who was quite prominent in women's club work.

In 1900 James McLachlan was again elected to Congress from this district. His vote was 27,081 to 19,793 for William Graves. H. Gaylord Wilshire, for whom the Wilshire District in Los Angeles was named, ran as a Socialist and polled 3,674 votes. If you will note the election statistics, you will find in this district at that period quite a large Socialist vote. It was considered a protest vote, showing dissatisfaction with both parties.



8th District
Inyo, Kern, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura Counties.

1901

Before the next election, California has been re-districted following the twelfth census, and we were now in the new eighth district. William E. Smythe of San Diego was a prominent Democrat of that day of the type that would now be called a 'left-winger.' He was his party's candidate for Congress. To oppose him, the Republicans chose Milton J. Daniels of Riverside, who was elected. Daniels was born, like many others of our congressmen, in New York State; but moved with his family to Pennsylvania at an early date, and eventually went into the lumber business with his father. Later he moved to Rochester, Minnesota where he served for eight years in the legislature. He had served for a time in the Union Army. He came to California in 1889, settling in Riverside where he was a prominent fruit grower. He was elected by a comfortable margin over his opponent.

In the 1904 election of a new figure came to the fore in the eighth district in the person of Sylvester C. Smith, a brother-in-law of F. S. Cook whose name you will find on the corner stone of our court house. Smith was an uncle of Mrs. Fred

Pidduck and others of George Cook's daughters, and of Mrs. Emma Mackin and others of F. S. Cook's children. His home was in Bakersfield, where he was at different times a newspaper publisher, a farmer, a school teacher and an attorney. He was opposed in 1904 by William T. Lucas, Democratic candidate for the office; but he defeated Lucas by a vote of 23,000 to 12,000. Smith was reelected three times, serving the district from 1905 to 1913.

He was quite a jovial man, fond of 'ribbing' people. I recall once sitting on the platform with him in the auditorium of the Masonic Temple in Oxnard, where I was to introduce him. There were not more than 40 people in the room but Smith made light of it. The Methodist minister in Oxnard at that time was named Avery, and he had formerly been Smith's pastor in Bakersfield. It was Wednesday evening, and I recall Smith's saying to the audience, "I met Mr. Avery and asked him to come to hear me tonight, and he said he would; but it would be late as it was prayer meeting night. However, he said, I'll come late and bring the people at prayer meeting with me." After Smith was well into his talk, he suddenly stopped as a solitary figure came up the aisle. When Mr. Avery was close enought to hear, Smith said "We will now pause while the prayer meeting comes in."

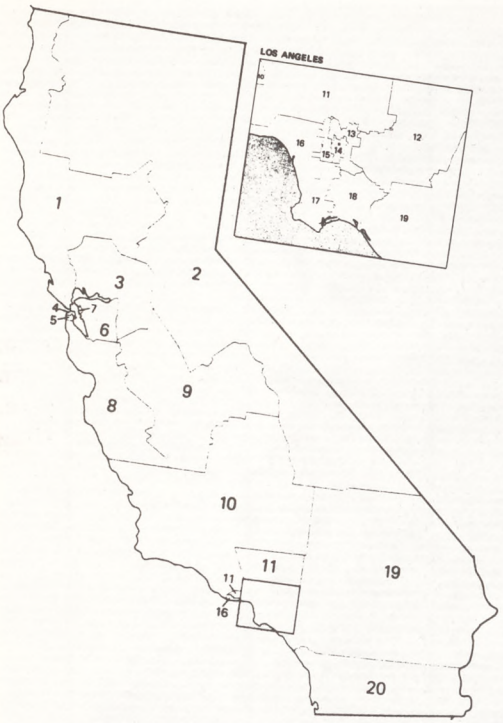
There were two brothers in San Jose at this time, who 'ran' Republican politics in Santa Clara County for a number of years: they were J. O. Hayes, better known as 'Black' Hayes; and Everis A. Hayes, better known as 'Red' Hayes. These names, I would explain, were from the color of their beards of which each had a luxuriant growth. I remember them well from a time dating back to the Republican State Convention of 1904. E. A. Hayes was then a representative in Congress from the fifth district, his years in Congress from that district covering a period (as I seem to recall) of about eight years. In 1912 after redistricting, he found himself in the eighth district; and he was elected from the new eighth and served as our congressman for six years. He was again a candidate to succeed himself in 1918; but there was a rebellion on against the Hayes brothers, and he was defeated by a majority of about 3,500 votes.

The successful candidate against him was Hugh S. Hersman. He was born in Maryland in 1872, and moved to California with his parents who settled in Berkeley in 1881. He attended public school in California, but graduated from the Southwestern Presbyterian University in Tennessee in 1893.

8th District
Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Ventura Counties.
1912

Later Hersman studied at the University of California in 1897 and 1898. He became president of the First National Bank at Gilroy, California and was an officer and director in various corporations. He was a capable representative in Congress, but was so unspectacular that I had difficulty in finding out much about him. He was again a candidate for election to succeed himself but was defeated.

In 1920 a new man came to the fore in this district, who was to stay in Congress for some time: Arthur M. Free of Santa Clara County, a lawyer. He had at different times served as city attorney of Mountain View and as district attorney of Santa Clara County. Free was one of the more prominent 'old grads' from Stanford University; and was, when elected, a resident of San Jose where he was a member of the Rotary Club. He was elected six times to Congress from this district, serving from 1921 to 1933. In 1922 in his second campaign, he received the nomination of both parties and was elected with a total vote of 57,926. In his first campaign Free beat Hugh S. Hersman by over 20,000 votes. He visited and spoke often in Ventura County.



10th District
Kern, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura Counties.
1931

In 1932 Henry E. Stubbs was elected, served one term, was reelected but died before serving out his full term. He was the only preacher, so far as I know, who ever represented this district in Congress. When elected, he was pastor of the Christian Church in Santa Maria. He was the first of a direct line of Democratic Congressmen, being followed by Alfred J. Elliott of Tulare and George E. Outland of Santa Barbara. Their elections were so recent that I think it the part of wisdom that I forego remarks about them.

During the 73 years since we became a separate county we have been represented by 19 men. Eleven of these have been Republicans, and eight of them Democrats. The Republicans have held the office for 47 years, the Democrats for 26 years. Thirteen of these men were admitted to the bar, and had at some time practiced law. Others may have been lawyers.

I think there have been four native sons elected to Congress from our several districts, namely: Romualdo Pacheco, born at Santa Barbara; Arthur M. Free, born at San Jose; George E. Outland, born in Ventura County; and Alfred J. Elliott.

William E. Shepherd

In 1908 S. C. Smith's opponent was our own W. E. Shepherd, the latter receiving 18,245 votes to Smith's 29,305, a good showing when considering the makeup of the district.

In 1914 J. M. Horton of Fillmore, running for Congress on the Prohibition ticket, polled over 4,000 votes. I believe I have mentioned all of the Ventura County men who have figured in any of our congressional races.

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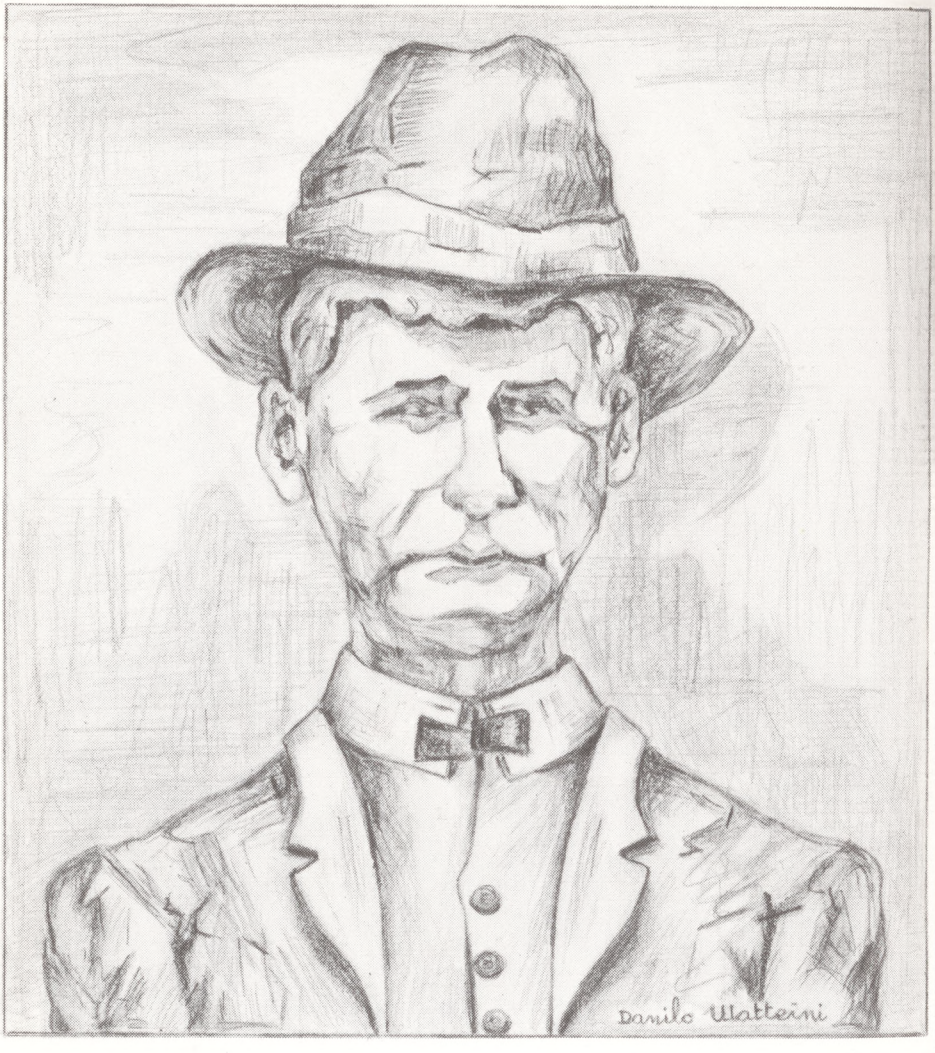
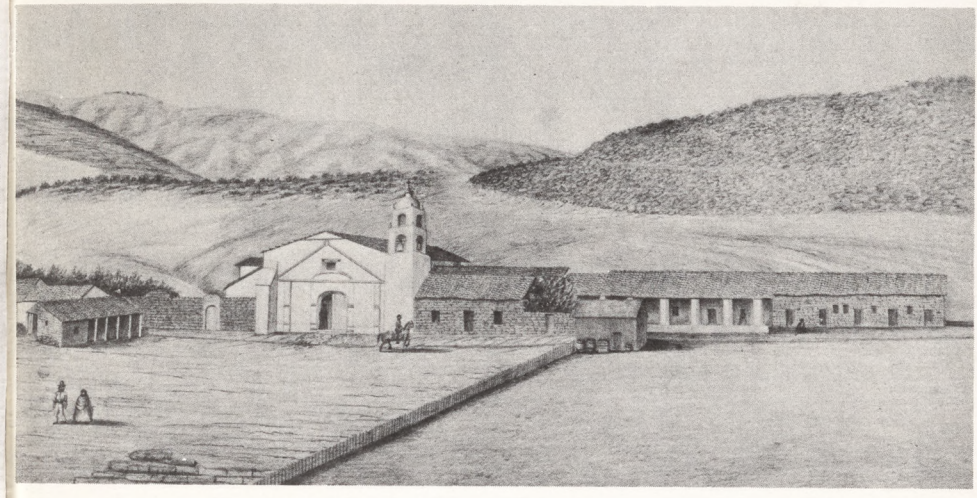


William Arthur Hobson

Hobson Bros. was the partnership of Abe and Bill Hobson, two of the sons of W. D. Hobson. These men complemented each other in their many enterprises. They ranged from Ventura County to Imperial Valley and elsewhere in California. Their part of Dixie Thompson's half of Subdivision No. 7 of Rancho San Miguel was the most memorable.



Mission San Buenaventura
by Henry Miller 1856

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Ventura County Historical Society

Quarterly

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Grant W. Heil, Editor

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OF MISSION SAN BUENAVENTURA
By Norman Neuerburg

Notice

Dr. Neuerburg was the Curator of Hispanic Colonial Architecture at the Southwest Museum, and is now working on the Serra bicentennial.

Fig. 1. Facade of the church around 1870: the stucco frame of the window is still in place; the off-center placement of the bell-chambers emphasize the buttressing function of the towers.

Fig. 2. The rear of the church shows the truncated cornice on the back, matching the one in front.

NEW LIGHT ON THE CHURCH OF MISSION SAN BUENAVENTURA

By Norman Neuerburg

The history of a building is much like that of a human body. It is conceived or planned, born or built, goes through life with a variety of ailments, operations and accidents; it may even undergo one or more facelifts! Without a detailed medical record, one cannot always tell what has transpired with a body; and without complete records, one cannot always tell what the vicissitudes of a building might have been. But in the one or in the other, slight clues may reveal much that had been forgotten or not even noticed.

In this manner the investigation of a few curious details in the church of Mission San Buenaventura has begun to reveal a much more complex and different history of the building than has been realized. The initial clues were three which then, of course, led to others. The first clue appears in the facade of the church, which has a cornice inexplicably placed in such a fasion that it is cut off by the sloping eaves of the roof at either end; a cornice in the same location was also on the rear wall of the church, but it was removed at some point between the 1870s and the 1930s. The second clue, visible in the earliest photographs (Fig. 5) of the interior, is the rather makeshift appearance of the upper zone of the reredos of the main altar. The third clue can be found in the old pulpit which was made of salvaged materials, not always matching. The implications of these clues became clear when the original records are consulted and properly interpreted.

The present church building was perhaps begun in 1792 or 1793; work continued in 1794, 1795 and 1796 according to surviving documents in the Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library.[1] In 1798 a report by the commandant of the Presidio of Santa Barbara says that the church, which was being built of fired brick, was almost ready to be roofed.[2] In 1799 the sacris-

1. The annual reports from 1797 to 1809 are missing from that collection (SBMAL) and can only be partially filled in from other sources.

2. "La paredes de la nueva Iglesia son de ladrillo . . .". This recently discovered document is now in the Huntington Library; it is shortly to be published in the *Masterkey* of the Southwest Museum.

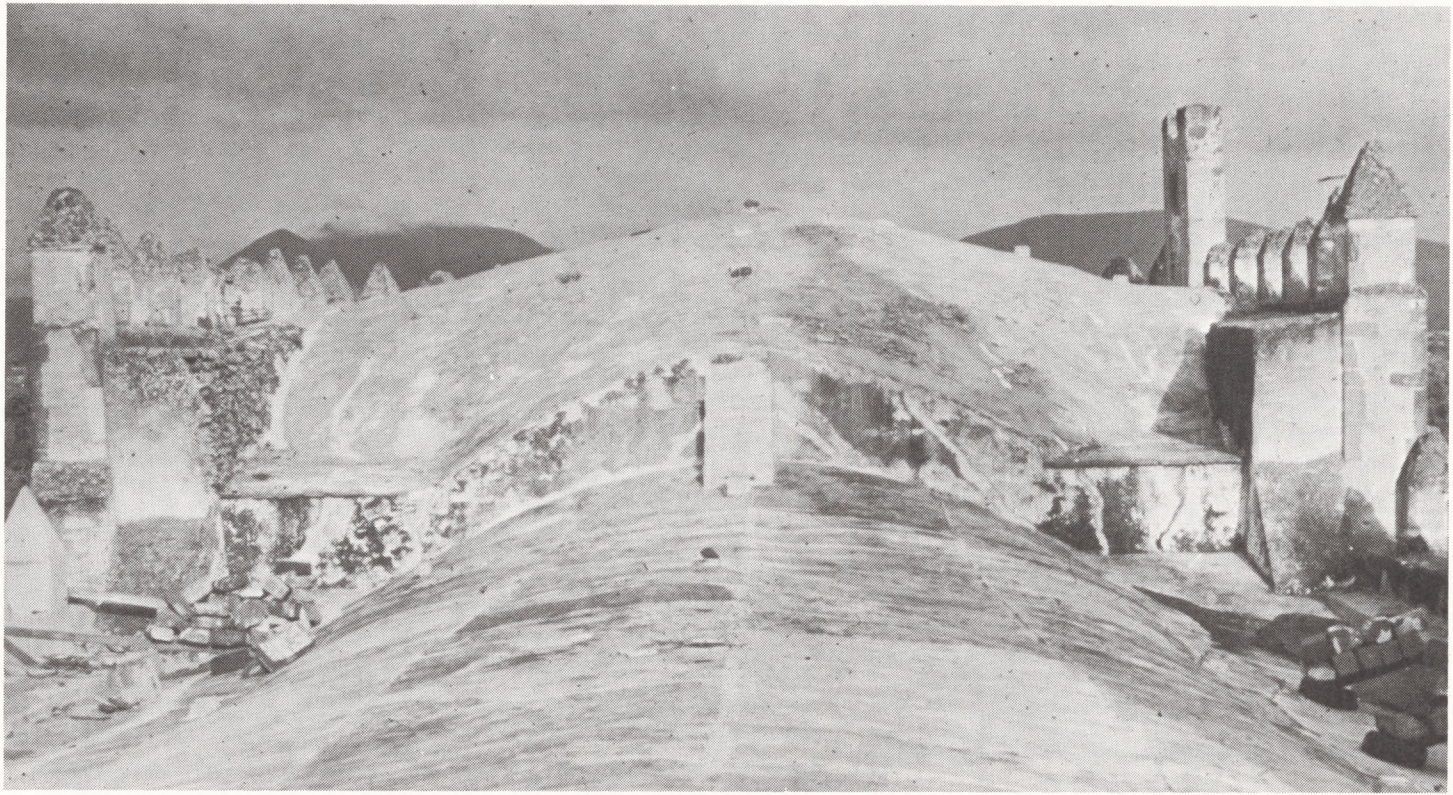


Fig. 3. Vaulted roof of the Sixteenth Century church at Ixmiquilpan.

ty was completed.[3] The church continued to be worked on; and although they tried to finish it in 1807, it was not completed until 1809 when it was blessed and the first Mass was sung on September tenth.[4] It was complete enough to be used for services; but work continued, and during the next two years they put in a smooth ceiling in the form of an arched vault.[5] It is not clear whether this ceiling was constructed of masonry or of wood, but the roof is called an *azotea* in a later document.[6] That usually means a flat roof terrace, perhaps covered with floor tiles, but it can also refer to the exterior covering of a vaulted ceiling. At any rate, it is clear that it was not a double slope tile roof like the existing one.

In 1812 there were three severe earthquakes which seriously damaged almost all of the buildings of the mission: the upper part of the church facade (about three *varas,* or more than eight feet of it) fell out of plumb; and a large crack appeared in the wall behind the altar, enough to need rebuilding. The rest of the church appeared repairable; and they hoped that with the strengthening of the foundations and the addition of buttresses it would end up stronger than before. The tower, however, was so badly damaged that it was decided to tear it down. For more than two years they continued to work on the repairs; and in 1814 they had replaced all the timbers and had substituted a tile roof for the *azotea.* The demolished tower was rebuilt; and on July 4, 1815, the feast of Saint Bonaventure, the church was again in use.[7]

Clear signs of the stabilizing of the church are the buttress on the left side of the facade, and the buttress-tower base overlapping the right side. Since the site of the church slopes seaward, some sort of support would have been required eventually, even without an earthquake. One finds a parallel at Mission San Diego where much more clumsy buttresses were also added to the church facade after the 1812 earth-

3. Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Buenaventura;* Santa Barbara, 1930; 25.
4. *Ibid.,* 26.
5. SBMAL, *Informes,* 1810, 1811.
6. *San Buenaventura. Libro de patentes e inventario,* 99 in the Archival Center, Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The text here is more extensive than that in the 1814 *Informe* at the SBMAL.
7. Engelhardt, *op. cit.,* 30-32.

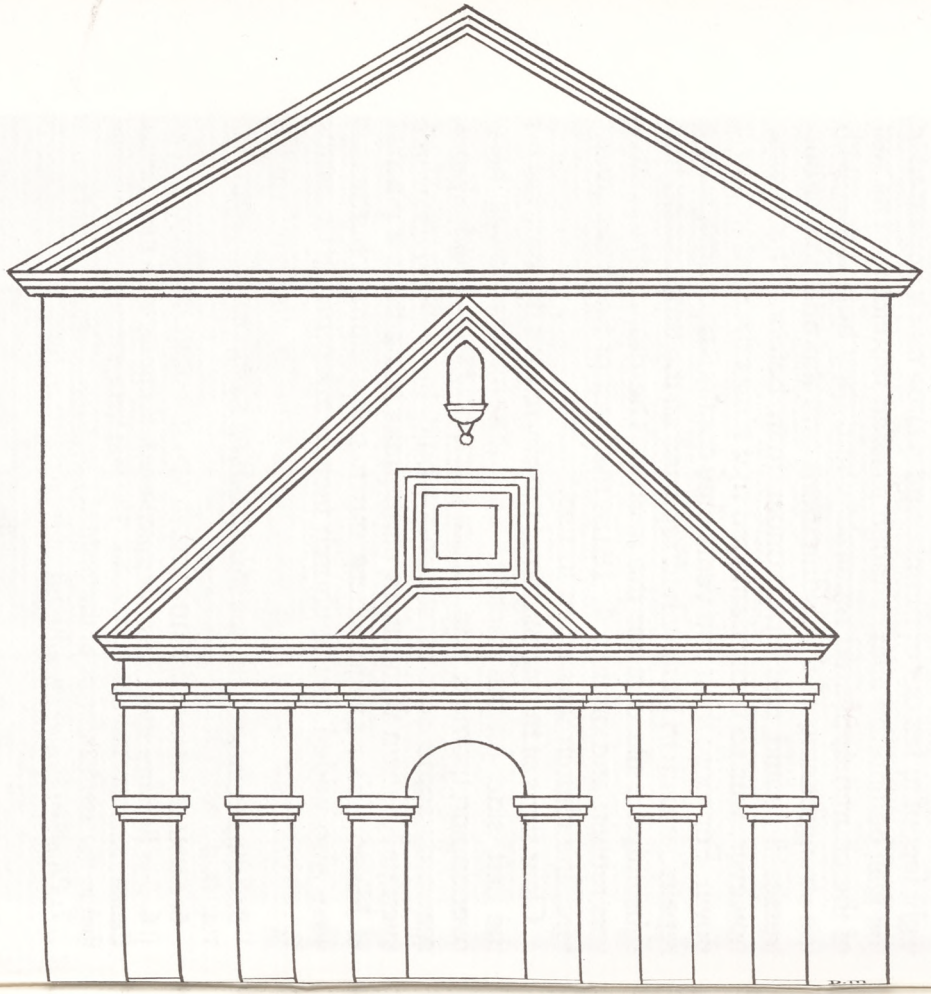


Fig. 4. Facade of the church before the 1812 earthquake.

quake there. The two buttresses at San Buenaventura hid parts of the architectural frame flanking the doorway; there must have been additional pilasters at either end originally. Apparently, also, a portion of the upper facade was taken down. For reasons that soon will be obvious it is certain that the church was originally somewhat higher, and the now truncated cornice must have extended the whole width of the facade and been capped by some kind of pediment; though whether it was a triangular gable like that of Mission Santa Barbara, a segmental one like the rear gable of Mission San Gabriel's church or even an undulating one like that at Mission San Luis Rey is not known. Since the gable most likely was partially free-standing with the *azotea* behind, it is not surprising that it might fall out of plumb in an earthquake.

It is not clear where the belltower was originally located, though it could have been in line with the church front. In its present location it acts as a buttress to the corner of the church as it is L-shaped in plan. Such a placement is rare, there being no other examples of such a location in California. The closest parallels are the belltowers of a small number of churches in Mexico City, of the church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Ciudad Jauarez, and of the ruined church of San Geronimo in Taos. The tower of the last-named acted as a sort of buttress while that of the former was free-standing and was built several decades later than the church itself, according to the tree-ring dating of the beams holding the bells. In the village of Santa Maria Tepeji in the state of Hidalgo the parish church[8] has heavy buttressing around the lower part of the belltower and a balancing buttress on the other side of the facade, much like San Buenaventura. This buttressing appears to be an addition and the reasons for it may be similar.

After an earthquake in 1857, the tile of the church roof was replaced by shingles. The lengthening of the side windows was probably carried out at the same time. It would seem that the curious frame around the window above the door was removed around 1870.

The original form of the facade is intimately connected with the pre-earthquake form of the interior. The height of the cor-

8. Justino Fernandez, *Catalogo de construcciones religiosas del estado de Hidalgo;* Mexico, 1942; II, 167 (Pl. IV, Fig. 483).

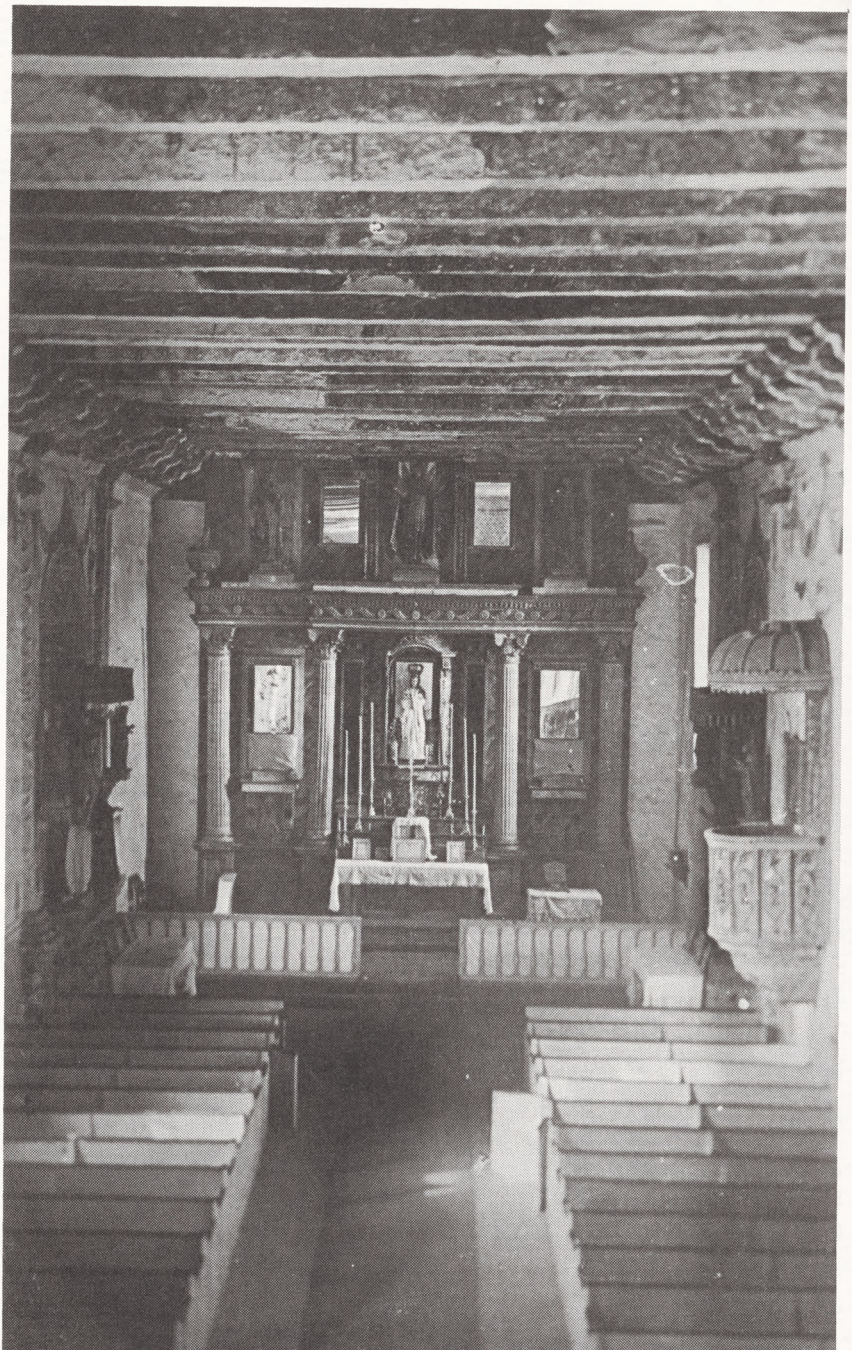


Fig. 5. Interior of the church before modernization: a double-zone reredos, mirrors and the pulpit on the wall.

nice running along the top of pilasters (that is, the pillars built against the wall) is about 23½ feet above the original level of the sanctuary floor; and it would appear that the pilasters and cornice were an integral part of the pre-earthquake design. The post-earthquake beamed ceiling is placed on brackets directly on top of the cornice. The reredos containing the images behind the altar table, which has been transformed in one manner or the other at least three times, is the key to resolving the problem.

The history of the main altar and its reredos is relatively well documented. In 1807 the mission requested two altar tables (one was for the chapel of Saint Michael) in the Italian or Roman Style, of normal height, marbleized and with gilded moldings and ornament.[9] Only one was sent at that time. This presumably is the one shown in the earliest photographs.

A letter dated January 4, 1808 and signed by Fray Jose Senan and Fray Marco Antonio de Vitoria makes the following request, "a main altar reredos for the new church, marbleized, and with the moldings, gables, and other ornament gilded; completely carved. The niches, and which saints should be included, the dimensions of the reredos, and other things which the artisan will know how to carry out, are put down in enough detail, in the drawing which we are sending".[10]

The reredos was made in the workshop of Jose Maria Uriarte, presumably in Mexico City, and was sent from there to San Blas in 1809. However it remained at the port, awaiting a ship, and arrived at the mission only in late 1811 or early 1812.[11] The bill, dated in December of 1809, lists "a reredos, 10 *varas* in height and 7 in width, of cedar and *allacaguite* [*Pinus ayacahuite*] in modern taste," costing 4,050 *pesos.*[12] It

9. Archivo Historico de Hacienda (AHH) Legajo 283, 51; "2 mesas de altar a la Italiana, o Romana, de altor regular jaspeadas, con los perfiles y remates dorados." Engelhardt, *op cit.*, 26 completely mistranslated this passage.

10. AHH, Legajo 283, 29, hoja 3 (recto and verso).

11. *The letters of Jose Senan, O.F.M.;* Ventura County Historical Society, 1962; 54, 63.

12. AHH, Leagjo 281, 60. On this same bill Uriarte also includes works for San Carlos, San Miguel, La Purisima, San Fernando, San Jose, San Luis Rey, San Francisco and San Diego.

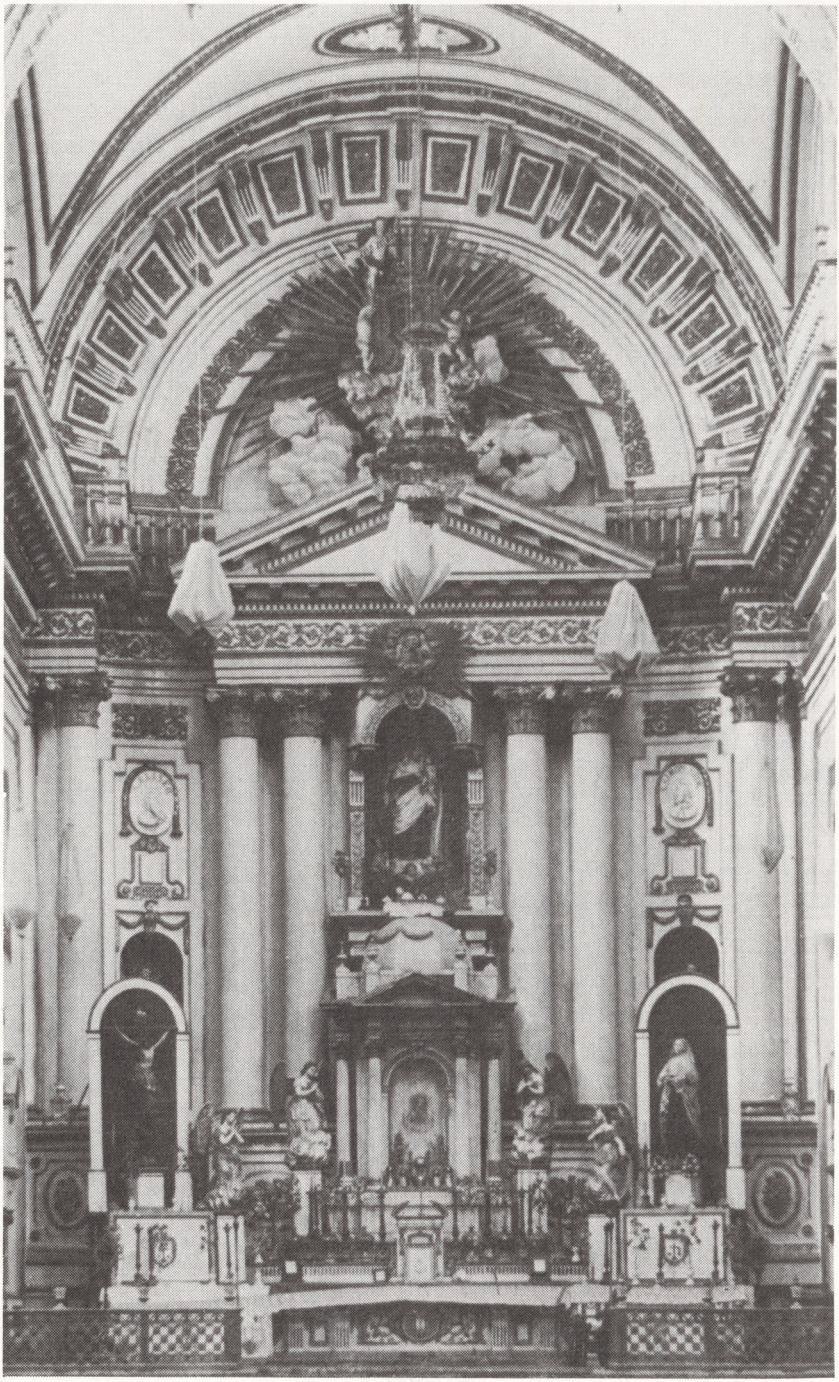


Fig. 6. Typical neoclassic interior in the "modern taste" specified by the two friars at San Buenaventura.

came dismantled in 45 boxes costing 247 *pesos* and 4 *reales*. Also packed in these boxes in the same shipment came: statues of Saint Bonaventure, Saint Francis and Saint Anthony, each a *vara* and 5/6 high and costing 82 *pesos* apiece; figures of Saint Anne and Saint Joachim, 1⅔ *varas* high and costing 75 *pesos* each; a Saint Joseph with its pedestal costing 92 *pesos*; another base costing 18 *pesos*; and statues of the Virgin of Mount Carmel and a second Saint Joseph a *vara* and ½ high at 80 *pesos* each. At the same time a more modest reredos and altar table came for the chapel of Saint Michael.

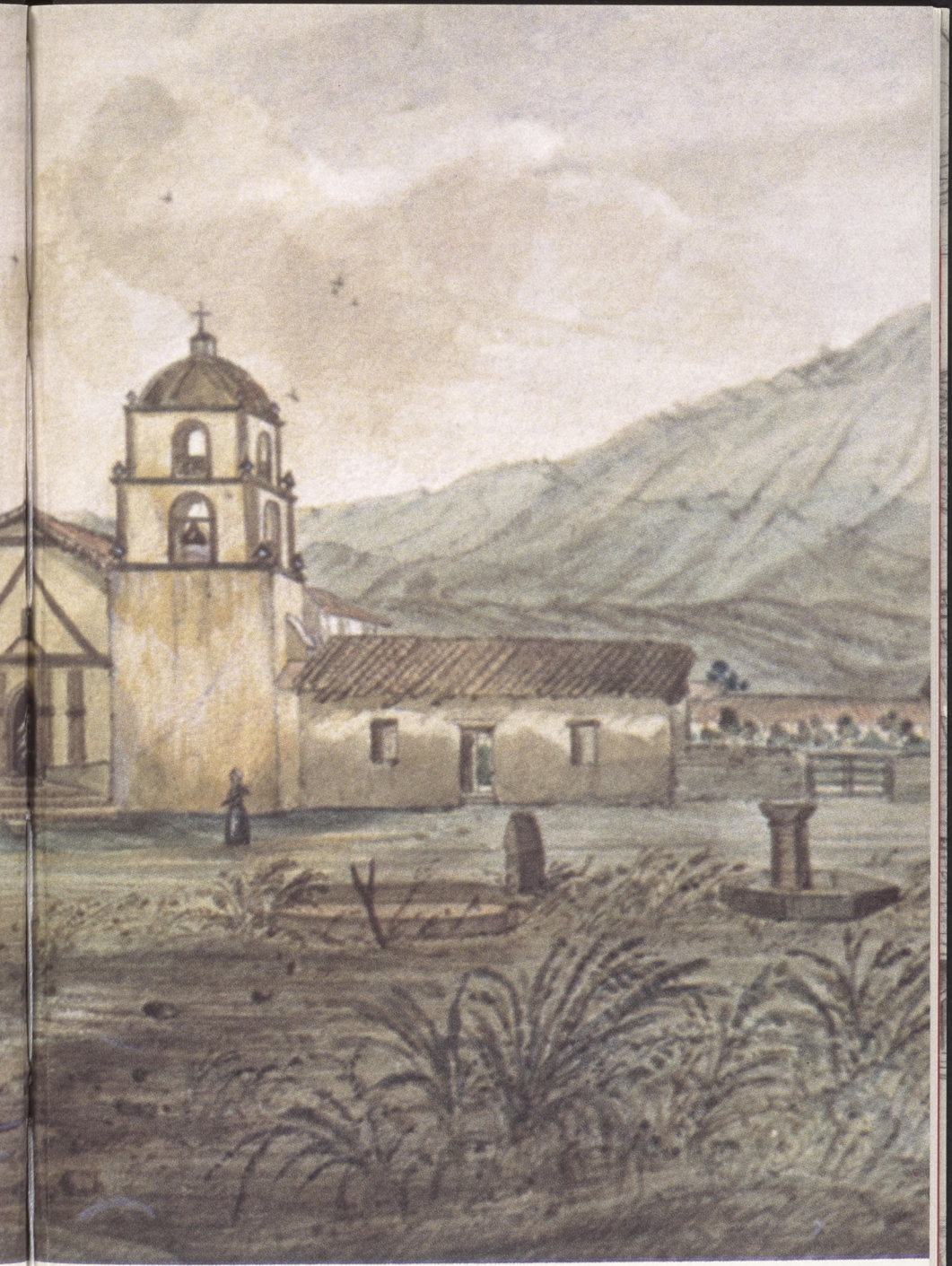
Unfortunately the drawing for the altarpiece mentioned in the letter does not now accompany the document in the Mexican archives. It was probably sent to Uriarte's shop where the altarpiece was made, and may have been discarded unless it survives among unidentified drawings still existing in the archives.

Since the ten *varas* (about 27½ feet) are about four feet higher than the present ceiling, it is obvious that the original one had to be higher because the dimensions presumably were those sent in the request. One can also assume another one and a half or two *varas* above the ten for the reredos to look proper in its space. We also mentioned that the ceiling was in the form of an arched vault and can assume that the curve started on top of the cornice on which the corbels of the beamed ceiling now rest. The question remains, of course, what the upper part of the reredos looked like. The answer is not difficult as there are innumerable parallels in Mexico, e.g. Fig. 6. The typical Spanish colonial church has a vaulted ceiling of some sort with the back wall terminating in a semi-circle, and the shape of the reredos conformed to this. Thus that is what we could expect to find here. The reredos of Mission Santa Clara is the closest parallel in California.

In Mexico often the wide frame of the arch is adorned with a series of coffers with an inner ornament. In the center there is usually a glory of gilded rays behind a figure, group or symbol. At San Buenaventura it was surely the patron who was in front of rays as he appears in the early views, Fig. 5. He would have been flanked by the statues of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony as they can be seen in those photographs. The urns,

Mission San Bue[illegible]vent[illegible]

Watercolor by Lt. J[illegible]nes [illegible]



Buenaventura in 1855

Lt. James Madison Alden

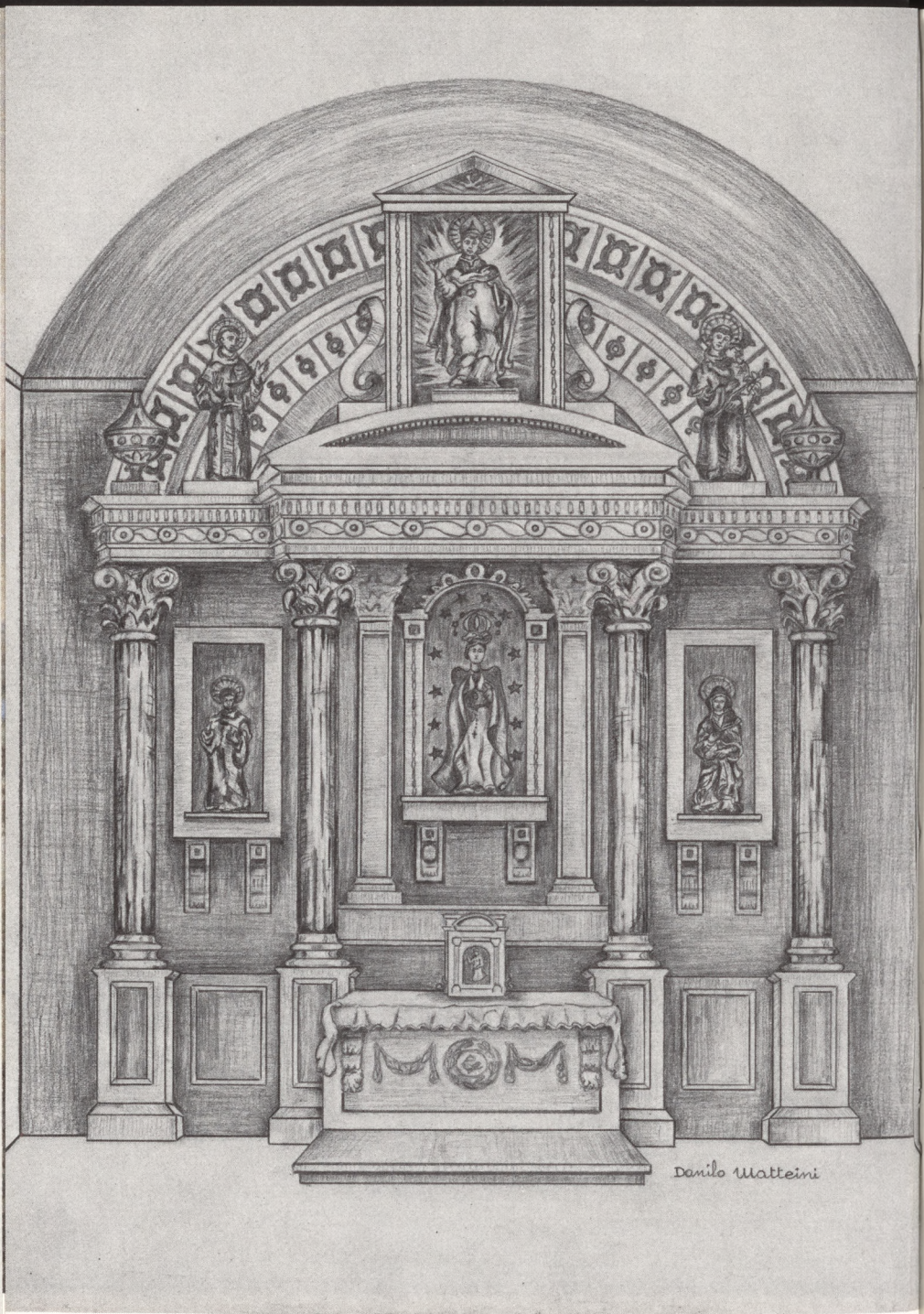


Fig. 7. Reconstruction of the reredos and vaulted ceiling of the church prior to 1812.

Fig. 8. Gospel side altar painted by Indian artists.

which got pushed over to the edge of the cornice, would probably have been centered above the end columns. There may have been a gable above the two center columns. It probably was segmental, like the reredoses of Mission Santa Clara and Mission San Luis Rey, rather than triangular as it now appears, to judge from the gables on the painted side altars. Thus Saint Bonaventure would have been placed higher than his companions and perhaps was in a sort of niche. In the lower zone the Immaculate Conception, which the mission received some years before, would have had the place of honor above the altar as in the early views; the Virgin would have been flanked by her parents, Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, on the brackets where mirrors appear in the photographs. The mirrors did not arrive until 1823 so they have nothing to do with the original design.[13] The statues of Saint Anne and Saint Joachim had already disappeared by the early

13. Engelhardt, *op cit.*, 59.

Fig. 9. Interior of the church in the 1880s at the midpoint of modernization: the pulpit and Indian decorations still in place; but the main reredos remodelled, Victorian side altars installed and tongue and groove boards covered the beamed ceiling.

1870s. Since then both the Saint Francis and the Saint Anthony have gone as well.

When the ceiling was lowered after the earthquakes of 1812, there was no space for the semicircular upper part and it was removed. Only two pilasters were re-used to flank the patron, and a series of marbleized panels were made as backing for the side statues in order to have the same six images as before. It is not clear what went between the statues before the mirrors were put there. When they arrived, they apparently were placed behind some of the images. Their function was glitter and multiplication of light, not the reflection of faces.

At the end of the pastorate of Juan Comopla (1861-1877) modernizing was undertaken though most of it was carried out under the Rev. Cyprian Rubio (1878-1895). In the first phase the beamed ceiling was hidden with tongue and groove boards, the floor tile was covered with wood and the sanctuary floor was raised another step (from two to three) and brought forward to include the side altars (John Calvin Brewster photographed one both before and after the extension of the floor); a new chancel rail was installed, but it is doubtful that the preceding one appearing in the first photographs was the original. New Victorian reredoses then covered the Indian painted side altars. A new altar table was made, and the platform raised from one to three steps. The reredos was brought forward, its base was heightened and a room was created behind it for the whole width of the sanctuary; this new room, however, was no higher than the bottom of the side niches. The makeshift upper level of the reredos was dismantled, and a triangular gable was placed in the center. The side niches were remodeled, the gilded ornament on the frieze was removed and the whole reredos was repainted in a new color scheme which was the reverse of the original one. The onyx colored columns now became a dark blue-grey or granite color, and the dark marbleizing of the rest was now a mottled white.

Subsequently the walls were replastered, apparently most of the original plaster was removed, except behind the new side altar reredoses, even to the changing of the profiles of the moldings of the pilasters; and all traces of the original Indian painted decorations were destroyed except behind the new

Fig. 10. Panels from the pulpit showing the non-matching moldings of salvaged materials; the two connected at the left constituted the access door.

Victorian side altars and in the baptistry where they survived by chance. Someone saved one fragment of painted plaster from a window frame and this is now displayed in the mission's museum. It was at this time that the fine pulpit was removed and dismembered. In the 1950s a partial restoration of the church was carried out. The original ceiling and floor were uncovered and the Victorian side altars were removed. However, the reredos was not taken back to the form it had before remodeling except for reproducing the original color of the columns. Ironically, most of the surviving original decoration in the baptistry was destroyed at this time as a door was cut through to a new larger baptistry.

We now come to the question: what happened to the upper part of the reredos when the ceiling was lowered? Surely, in those days it would not simply have been discarded. Again the answer is at hand. Portions of it were used in the construction of the magnificent pulpit which was perhaps the most lamented victim of Rubio's zeal for modernization. If one examines a good print of the photograph Brewster took just before it was removed, one can note that a number of the moldings do not match; this is even more obvious in a photograph of three of the panels which were salvaged. These moldings, and probably many more details, must have come from the upper part of the reredos. It is not impossible that some pieces were used on the two confessionals as well.

This pulpit, as far as we can tell, was the most elaborate one in Alta California; only that of San Luis Rey could approach it. A very peculiar feature is the paneled back, a detail not found elsewhere in California and almost unknown in New Spain except perhaps in movable pulpits. Why then do we find it here and what could have been its function? Surely the pulpit was not meant to be movable. Again the answer is that the decorative ornaments in each panel came from the upper part of the reredos, probably from the coffers of the framing arch, and they simply wished to make effective use of them somehow.

There remains one problem which has defied solution for many years; how on earth did the priest enter the pulpit? In some churches such as at the mission at Carmel, Mission San Antonio and Mission San Luis Rey there is a passage in the wall behind with a doorway; but there is no evidence of that

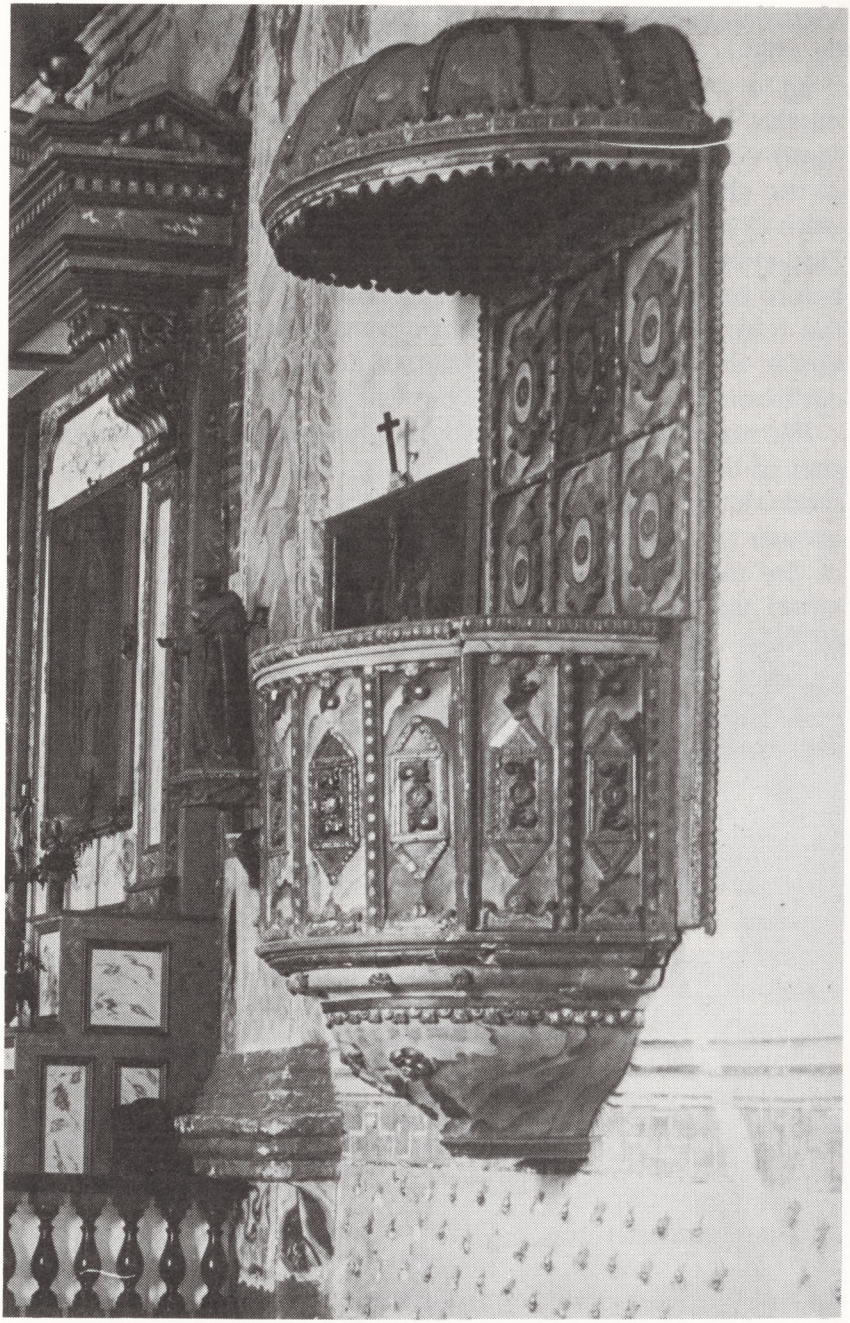


Fig. 11. In detail, the white line cutting through the dado indicates the placement of the access ladder. Breaks in the upper rim of the paneling and the hole in the lower one were the points of attachment of the ladder.

here. In others like Mission San Gabriel and Mission San Miguel a stairway leads up from a break in the sanctuary rail; but there is no indication of that in the photograph taken from the sanctuary, Fig. 9. Anyway, there was a side altar between the railing and the pulpit so it would be highly impractical. What one must do is look at it from the other side, from the rear of the church, and fortunately photographs taken between the two phases of Rubio's remodeling give the answer. An enlargement of a detail of one of them showing the pulpit reveals that the two vertical panels next to the wall form a break:[14] there is a clear separation in the rim there; and below the lower left corner of the second panel there is the hole for the attachment of a ladder, the line of which is clearly shown by a diagonal white stripe going through the painted dado. One can even see that the dado was painted after the installation of the pulpit and its ladder.[15]

It is true that such a placement of the access to the pulpit is unusual, possibly unique; but if we consider the function of the pulpit in mission churches, it is not quite so surprising. In the early church the pulpit, or ambo, was used for the reading of the Gospel and the Epistle during Mass. Only subsequently did the pulpit come to be used for sermons. Eventually that use became the principal one; and the pulpit was brought closer to the congregation, especially following the Council of Trent (1545-63) when they were often used for preaching apart from the celebration of the Mass. Pulpits in the missions were used extensively for teaching. Thus the congregation would be oriented toward the pulpit rather than toward the altar, and there was no necessity for the preacher or teacher to enter from the sanctuary.

We have by no means exhausted all the questions about the history of the church building; those are for other times and other places perhaps, but in this we have resolved some nagging questions that have bothered me at least, if no one else. Not all questions can be answered, but it is worth trying to; and sometimes one can succeed where it might seem impossible.

14. Two of the surviving panels, in fact, were this very gate. See Fig. 10.

15. A reproduction of the pulpit was installed in the church of Mary Magdalen in Camarillo, designed by Albert C. Martin in 1913. Fig. 12.

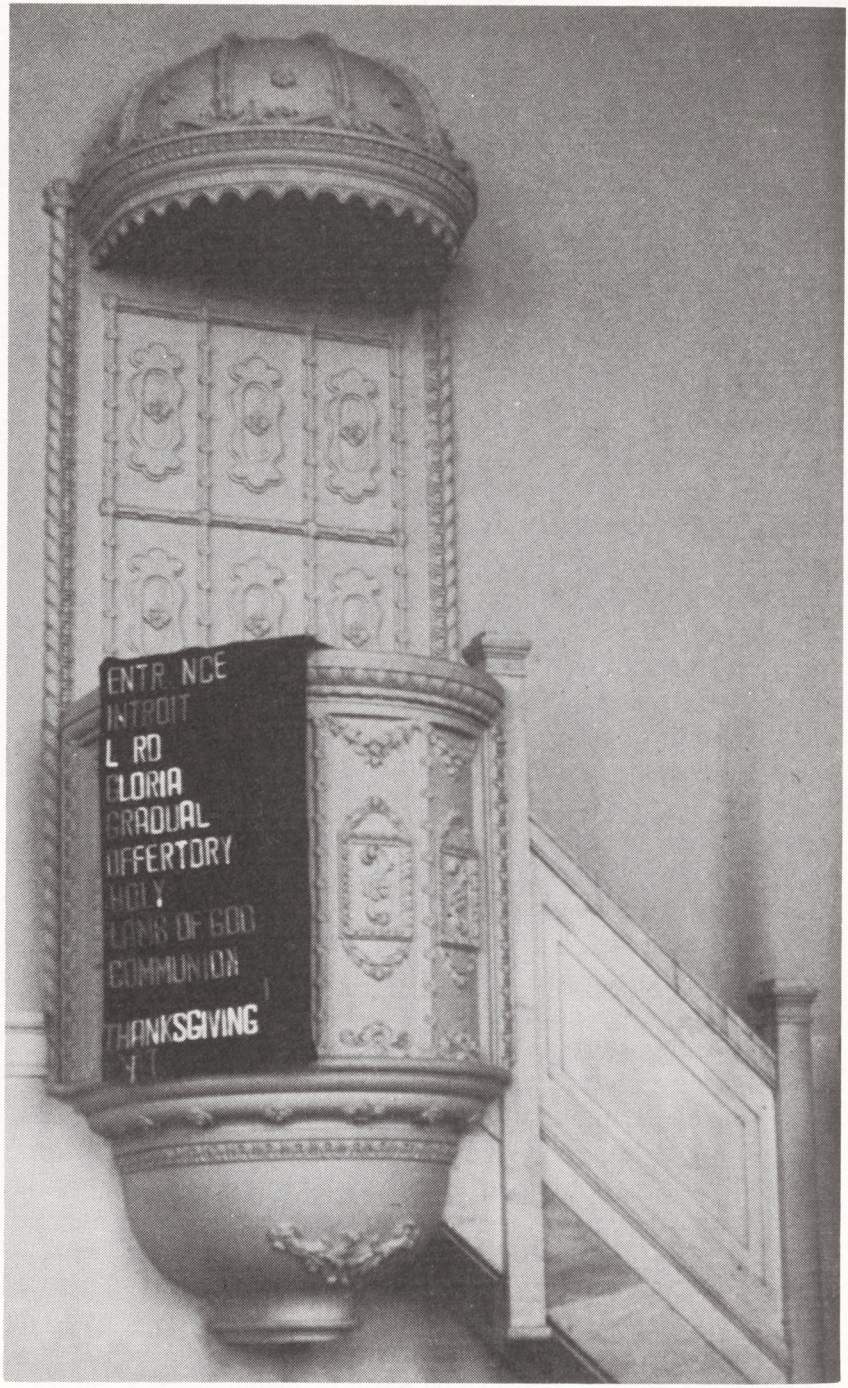


Fig. 12. Reproduction of the pulpit from San Buenaventura in the church of Mary Magdalen in Camarillo.

CREDITS

Fig. 1. Reproduced courtesy of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

Fig. 2. John Calvin Brewster has photographed Henry Chapin Ford in the foreground, perhaps in the 1880s.

Fig. 3. The *azotea* photographed by the author in Hidalgo.

Fig. 4. The author's reconstruction omits the bell-tower; and the height and shape of the gable is conjectural. Redrawn by Danilo Matteini.

Fig. 5. One of a number of views taken by Brewster in the 1870s.

Fig. 6. The reredos behind the main altar of the church of El Carmen at Celaya, designed by Francisco Edwardo Tresguerras in 1802-1807 and photographed ca. 1900 by Sylvester Baxter.

Fig. 7. Designed by the author and redrawn by Danilo Matteini.

Fig. 8. A Brewster photograph of the 1870s.

Fig. 9. Reproduced courtesy of the Santa Barbara Historical Society. A Brewster photograph of the 1880s.

Fig. 10. Reproduced courtesy of the Index of American Design, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 11. Detail of Fig. 9.

Fig. 12. Photograph by the author.

Centerfold reproduced courtesy of the California Historical Society, Fine Arts Collection, San Francisco.

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GLOSSARY

bracket: a support projecting from a wall or column.

buttress: a vertical mass of masonry projecting from its external face to stiffen a wall.

corbel: a projection of stone or brick built into a wall to support a beam.

coffer: a deeply recessed panel sunk in the surface of a ceiling.

cornice: a horizontal molding which externally crowns the composition of a facade; and occurs internally at the junction of a wall and ceiling.

dado: the part of a room below the rail.

facade: the face of the front of a building.

frieze: the space between the top of the panelling and the ceiling.

gable: the vertical triangular portion of a wall.

niche: an ornamental recess; usually with an arched top, and often intended to contain a statue.

pediment: triangular space in a gable, usually decorated.

pilaster: a flat, rectalinear column against the face of a wall.

profile: a simulated section.

reredos: an ornamental screen behind the altar.

vault: an arched plane that forms a ceiling or roof.

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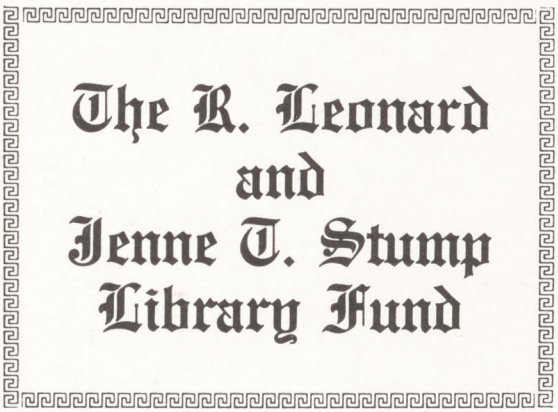


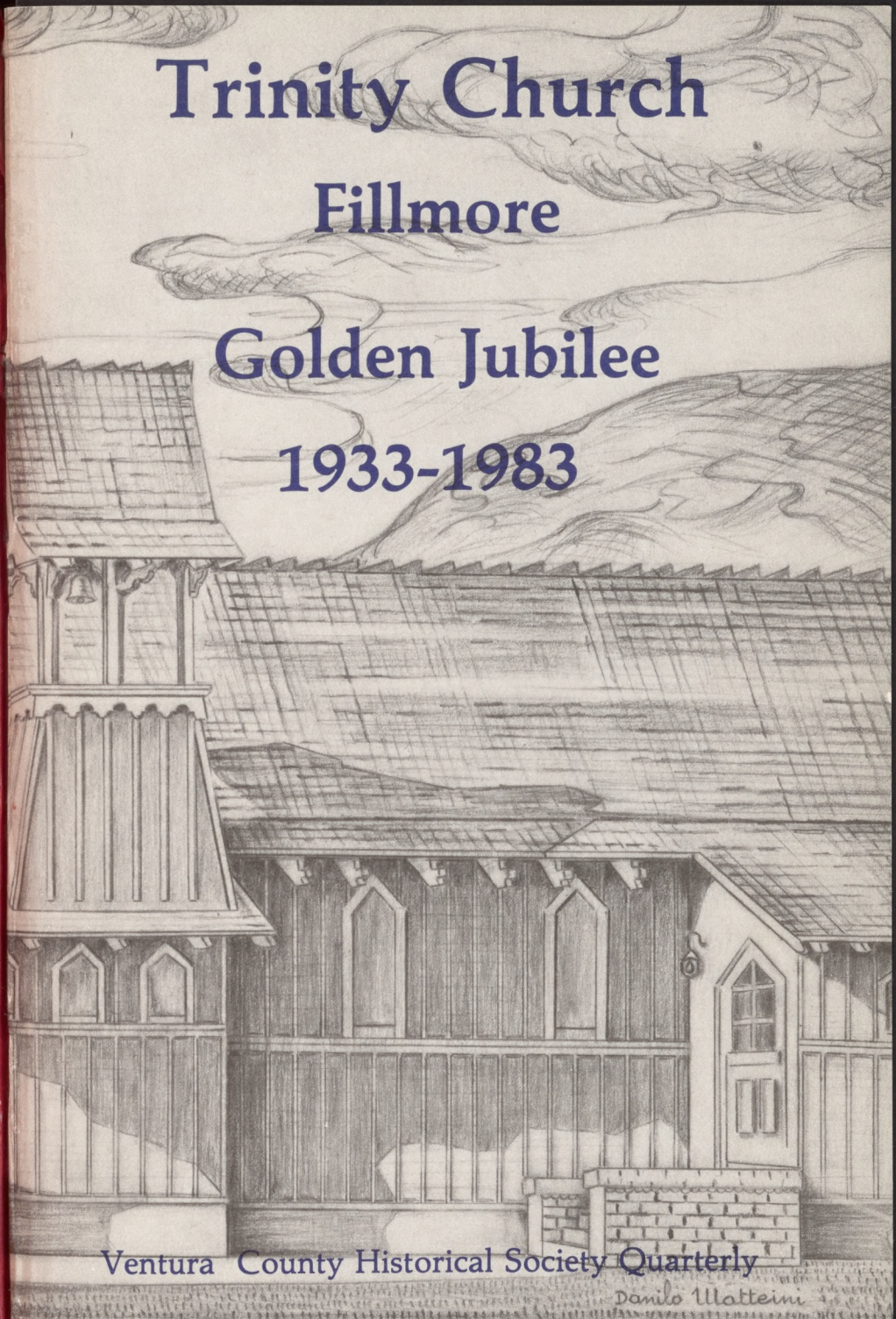
Mission San Buenaventura, Alta California
by H. T. Powell, 1850

Trinity Church

Fillmore

Golden Jubilee

1933-1983



Danilo Mattheini

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The

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Grant W. Heil, Editor

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By Dulcie B. Arnold

Notice

Mrs. Arnold is a resident of Fillmore, a member of the congregation at Trinity. The cover was drawn by Danilo Matteini. Pictures were lent by Mrs. Zoella Marriott, the Ventura County Historical Museum, All Saints, Oxnard, St. Paul's, Santa Paula and Trinity Church.

The Rev. Walter Harvey Marriott

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Santa Paula

HISTORICAL NOTES ON TRINITY CHURCH, FILLMORE

By Dulcie B. Arnold

Episcopal services in Fillmore began many years prior to there being a church building in which to hold them, and long before the gatherings of the few Episcopalians and other interested persons could be called a mission. There are no local church records of what took place in the very early days, so there is no known exact date when the first *Prayer Book* service was held. From the *Church Register* of St. Paul's Church, Santa Paula and other sources, we do know that services were being held, though not regularly, in homes and other available buildings as early as 1892.

On June 8, 1890 the Rev. W.A.M. Breck, Missionary-in-charge of St. Paul's Mission, Ventura held the first service for what was to be St. Paul's Church, Santa Paula in the old City Hotel on Ojai Street. A very short time later in the same year, the Rev. W.H. Marriott of Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, who had been licensed in 1886 by Bishop William I. Kip of the Diocese of California, moved with his family to Santa Paula from the Antelope Valley. He was given permission by Assistant Bishop William H. Nichols to hold services in Santa Paula. Mr. Marriott was a true missionary for he not only built the first St. Paul's Church in Santa Paula in 1892 (largely at his own expense) and served as their first priest for ten years without remuneration, but also found time to journey to Fillmore and hold services whenever he could from 1892 until his death in 1902 at the age of 71.

While Mr. Marriott ministered to the Fillmore people, the *Register* shows that Ernest Thomas Brevetor, born October 29, 1892, was baptized by Mr. Marriott at the home of his parents, Thomas and Emma Brevetor, in Fillmore on December 30, 1892. The very first two burials noted were also Fillmore residents: Herbert James Goudge, three days old, was buried January 25, 1892; and Julia Adelaide Hutchinson, 29, was buried February 3, 1892. It was not until 1908 that a marriage of a Fillmore couple was recorded. The Rev. George Robinson, probably a visiting or supply minister from elsewhere in the county, married "John Powell Hinckley of Fillmore and Fanny Baines of Sespe on Aug. 6, 1908." This quotation has been checked with Lawrence Hinckley: the marriage was that of his grandfather and his step-grandmother; actually she was Fanny Barnes, not Baines, and the marriage took place in the home of her mother in the area of Sespe.

During the period between 1890 and 1900 the Episcopal Church seemed to come to life in other areas of the Santa Clara Valley: Trinity Mission at Hueneme was organized as a Mission in union with the Diocese; what was to become All Saints, Oxnard held its first *Prayer Book* service; and clergy from other areas in the county were occasionally traveling to Fillmore to conduct services. The *Church Messenger*, a Diocesan publication, has an item in its April 1898 issue, stating that "the Missionary-in-charge at Hueneme planned to have services at Fillmore, but Church people there preferred to wait until a Sunday service could

Fillmore at the turn of the century

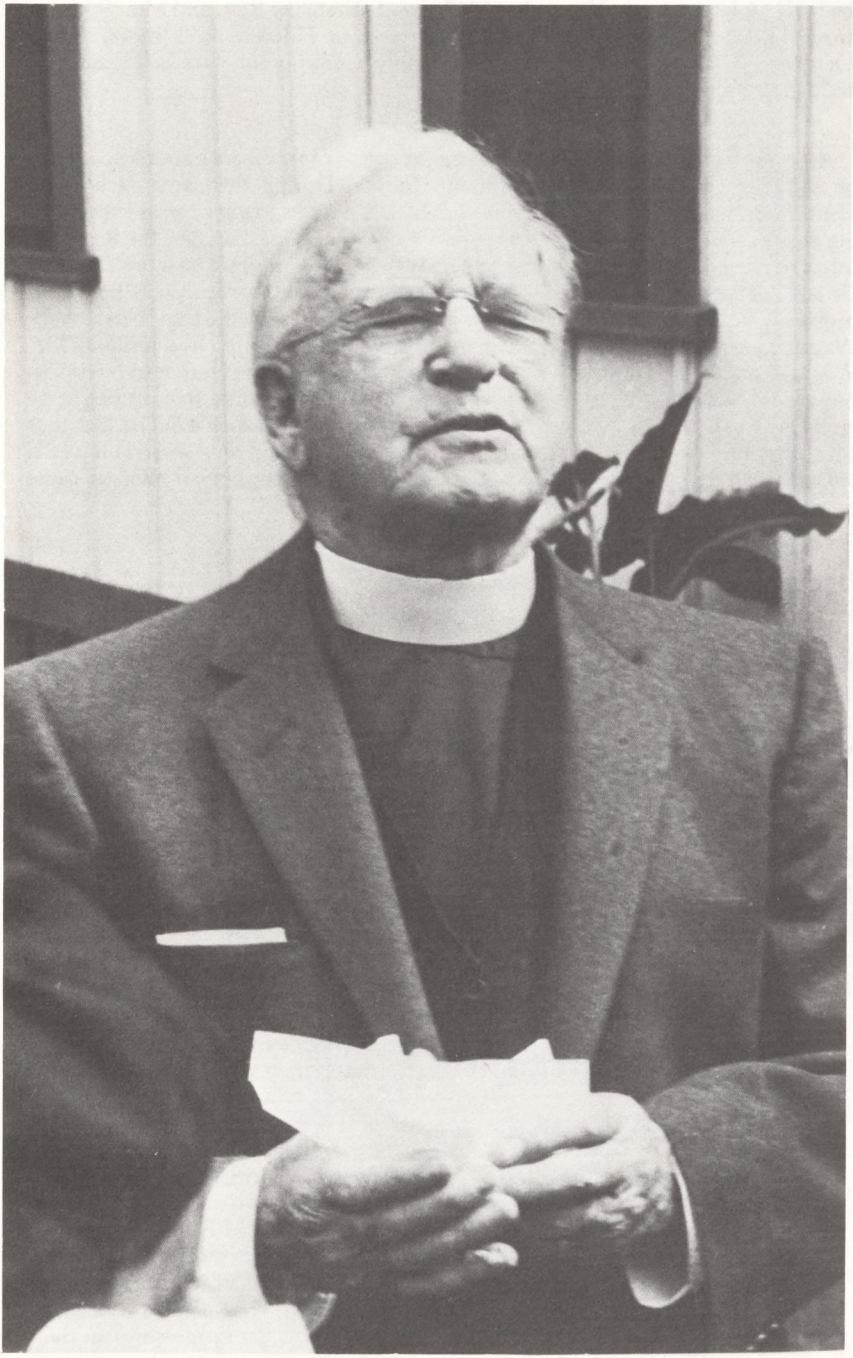
be had". A later issue in November 1898 reports that "the Rev. and Mrs. Spencer, from Trinity Mission, Hueneme held services at Fillmore in a rental chapel October 30, 1898, in the evening. The Holy Communion was celebrated the following morning with six communicants."

After the death of Mr. Marriott there is an hiatus of ten years in our knowledge of what was happening in the Fillmore Church. During this same decade the history of the Church in Santa Paula shows that the congregation was experiencing great difficulty in securing permanent clergy. Only one minister, the Rev. Ben Johnson Darneille, who served from 1910-1912, stayed longer than a few months. He left to become the minister at Trinity Church, Hueneme from 1912-1914. This probably accounts for a statement in the letter received from Mrs. W.E. Wagener, an early member of the Fillmore Episcopal group. She writes, "Mr. Wagener and myself always had a sentimental feeling for the church [referring to our church building] because we went over to the Bard Estate [Hueneme] to be married November 22, 1912, by the Rev. Ben Johnson Darneille." The fact that Mr. Darneille was known to the couple because he had held services in Fillmore is strengthened by her letter which continues "for years the Episcopal minister came over to Fillmore from Santa Paula."

In 1913 the history of the Fillmore Episcopal Church became even more closely tied with that of Santa Paula as shown by the following quotation from the history of St. Paul's written by C.P. Strickland: "From its inception St. Paul's Mission in Santa Paula had served all the people of the Eastern part of the Santa Clara Valley. In May 1913 the Episcopal Church in Fillmore was organized as a mission of St. Paul's, Santa Paula. For about twenty years after this the Vicar-in-charge of Santa Paula was also Vicar in Fillmore, and later of Ojai, also. This arrangement was terminated in the mid-Thirties."

News items in the *Fillmore Herald* as late as 1933 refer to "the Santa Paula and Fillmore Episcopal Church." On Friday, January 13, 1933, according to the newspaper, "Mrs. Glenn Wallerstedt and daughter Rachel, Mrs. Ethelyn Stephens and Mrs. W.E. Wagener attended the annual dinner and meeting of the Santa Paula and Fillmore Episcopal Church." Another item refers to the Rev. G.M. Macdougall of Santa Paula as "the pastor of the Fillmore and Glen City Episcopal Church."

Mrs. Eugene Gardner went to Santa Paula as a bride in 1917 and immediately began attending St. Paul's Church. Her rector writes that "she has been intimately associated with our church for over fifty years, and is familiar with much of the church's activities in Fillmore. She is a valuable source of information and as knowledgeable as anyone I know of the church's work in this area." In "A Church Family Album," an article written by Mrs. Gardner and presented to a meeting of St. Paul's Churchwomen, she writes, "the Episcopal Mission in Fillmore became a part of St. Paul's in 1913 . . . and in 1918, the women of Fillmore joined the Women's Guild of St. Paul's." In the same article, she mentions Mrs. Herbert Walker, Mrs. Richard Stephens and Mrs. Duke Clarke, Sr. of Fillmore as regular Guild attendants. In a conversation with Mrs. Gardner, she said that four or five women and sometimes more from Fillmore, attended Guild meetings in Santa Paula all through the war years and helped with the sewing. From the newspaper



The Rev. George Macdougall

we know that there were many meetings of the Guild taking place in Fillmore in the homes of the members.

From 1913 to 1936 services were held in Fillmore, at first without any regularity but eventually on a monthly basis, and sometimes more frequently by the clergy serving St. Paul's Church. The Rev. George Macdougall was the last of these clergy to serve both churches. The first historical entry in Trinity Church's *Register*, perhaps made by Mr. Macdougall states that "the following clergy, all resident Santa Paula ministers, held services in Fillmore:

The Rev. W.H. Marriott 1892-1902
The Rev. Charles Stanley Mook 1914
The Rev. Douglas H. Atwill 1918
The Rev. Walter L. Wood 1920
The Rev. W.E. Patrick 1922-1925
The Rev. Lloyd Smith 1925-1928
The Rev. George Macdougall 1919-1936

It does not agree with the dates and the names of the resident ministers given in St. Paul's history. The first one listed after Mr. Marriott was not a resident clergyman. The Rev. Douglas Atwill was in Santa Paula from 1914-1917, instead of 1918 as given. Mr. Wood, whose correct dates are 1919-1920, was not immediately succeeded by the Rev. Patrick as the above shows. Between the two was a Rev. Mr. M.D. Kneeland, 1920-1922, who undoubtedly must have conducted some services in Fillmore if he was in Santa Paula for two years. The rest of the dates and names are the same, except that Mr. Macdougall's last service was held February 24, 1935.

It was during Mr. Macdougall's ministry that services were held more frequently and regularly in Fillmore. Several persons still active in Trinity remember attending services in the State Bank. Some people recall that other services were held in the lobby of the Fillmore Theatre, which was owned at the time by an Episcopal family by the name of Starnes. The *Fillmore Herald* has numerous items about services held in homes or at the Ebell Club, and of Lenten services held at four o'clock at the homes of Guild members. The *Herald* also gives evidence of a very active Guild in the late Twenties and early Thirties. One evening party, described in detail in the newspaper, was held in the Masonic Temple. It was attended by over one hundred guests. Quilts made by the women were "given away". Prizes and supplies were donated by Fillmore merchants. The party was hailed as being a great success as "a substantial sum of money was made for the carrying on of church activities."

It is at this point that the history of Trinity Episcopal Church, Fillmore joins with the history of Trinity Mission, Hueneme. To know all the background of what was to eventually become Trinity Church, Fillmore's church building, it is necessary to go back to 1889 when Mr. Breck went to Hueneme to hold services for the Episcopalians in that area. From almost the first, a *Register of Services* as well as other records were kept. In 1889 we learn from them that Thomas Robert Bard Gerberding, born at Hueneme August 27, was baptized by Mr. Breck on September 27. He also baptized other children born to the Gerberding and Bard

Mrs. Mary Gerberding Bard and a daughter

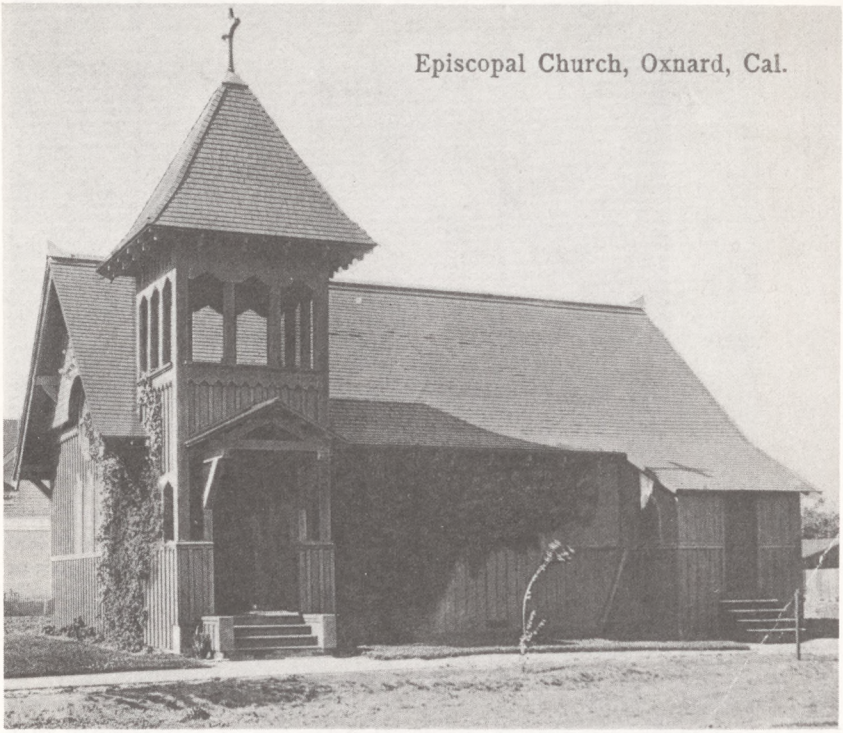
families from that date through 1892. The last baptism was for Bard's son Richard, born February 17, 1892 and baptized three days later on February 20. We find the name of the Rev. Octavius Parker appears in the *Register* for the first time in 1894, when he baptized two Gerberding children. According to statements in D.O. Kelley's *History*, at "Trinity Mission, Hueneme, services were first begun by the Rev. Octavius Parker . . . during the last decade of the nineteenth century." He was followed by the Rev. W.H. Spencer, 1897-1898, and by the Rev. Duncan Mackenzie, 1900-1911.

Presbyterianism came to Hueneme in 1885, and Thomas R. Bard joined the church shortly thereafter. In 1890 ground was broken for the Presbyterian Church but there were no Sunday School rooms provided in the new building; so the upstairs part of Bard Hall, built by Mr. Bard in 1883 as a place where community organizations could meet, was used. A letter written in 1943 by Blanch McInness, an Episcopalian writing to convey history of the Church in the Hueneme-Oxnard area in the early days, gives an interesting account of the Sun-

a lych-gate

day School where Episcopal services were held in Hueneme before the church was built: "In my girlhood days I knew Hueneme from 1890-1896, and my family and I attended church services which were held once a month in what was known as Bard's Hall which was a room built over one of the first floors by Senator Bard. Sunday School also carried on in the same room in which Presbyterians as well as Episcopalians and even Jewish children joined and attended regularly every Sunday morning. Senator Bard (not then a Senator) a Presbyterian, acted as Superintendent, with his wife, an Episcopalian, as one of the teachers of which there was from 4-5. The children numbered 50-60. All the Bard children were baptized by an Episcopal rector." Senator Bard's wife Mary, a Gerberding before her marriage in 1876, was an ardent Episcopalian who had been a member of Grace Church, San Francisco before moving to Hueneme. There were already members of the Gerberding family associated with the Senator in business in Hueneme at the time, and others followed. These two families seem to have been largely responsible for the organization of Trinity Mission in union with the Diocese of California in 1890. It is their two family names which appear oftenest in the church records.

The *Diocesan Journal* of 1899 reported that "Hueneme has a building fund amounting to $1200." Strangely enough, in 1901, when the town was showing signs of fast becoming a ghost town, Trinity Episcopal Mission, Hueneme was built. The *Report ;of the Treasurer* shows the bulk of the building fund was given by the Guild which had worked fifteen years to accumulate the money. The land, however, was given by the Senator, who picked a spot close to the new home, Berylwood which he had built for his wife. He also gave what was then a generous donation. A most interesting document was found in the Trinity, Hueneme *Register*. It is an accounting of the money spent for the church and has some interesting items including a "Hitching Rack", and the explanation of why the expensive one costing $20 was bought. The church, built to somewhat resemble an English one complete with lych-gate, was free of debt according to the *Treasurer's Report*.



All Saints' Church
Oxnard

The tenure of the Rev. Duncan F. Mackenzie covered the period during which the church was erected and lasted until 1911. At the same time All Saint's, Oxnard was organized as a Mission in union with the Diocese of Los Angeles. In 1904, Mr. Mackenzie was instrumental in the building of the first All Saints' Church. One of Fillmore's parishioners recalls that the new building looked very much, if not exactly, like Trinity Mission, Hueneme. Although Hueneme's population was still dwindling, two other Vicars followed Mr. Mackenzie. In 1915 on March 8, Senator Thomas R. Bard died in his sleep at Berylwood. While the Legislature stood adjourned, the burial service was conducted at Trinity Mission, by Mr. Mackenzie, with only the family and a few friends present. In accordance with the Senator's wishes, "his body was taken to Los Angeles for cremation, and his ashes were returned to Berylwood before sunset that same day for interment beneath the tall gum trees" where his son Robert was buried some years before. The following year in 1916 Richard Bard was married to Joanna March Boyd; and later as Mrs. Bard writes in her letter, their "first baby, Joanna March Newton, was baptized at the little font [now] in your [Fillmore's] church". These services must have been some of the last ever held in Trinity Mission, Hueneme. The *Diocesan Journal* for 1918 states briefly on page 119, "regular services were discontinued at Hueneme during 1917".

MRS. MARY BARD OF BERYLWOOD GIVES LITTLE REDWOOD CHURCH TO FILLMORE EPISCOPALIANS

The news of the gift has brought much rejoicing all over the city as it will be a fine asset for Fillmore to boast such an attractive little church, situated in such a desirable spot and to establish an Episcopal church here.

October 13, 1933

Sixteen years later two couples from Fillmore, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Stephens and Mr. and Mrs. Duke Clarke, Sr. visited Hueneme, and while there decided to go and look at the little church. They found it deserted and in disrepair. They knew that here was the possible realization of the dream of Fillmore's Episcopalians for a building. How to get it was a problem for it was well known that Mrs. Bard had consistently refused offers of many people to buy it. Returning home they consulted Mr. Macdougall who, in his forthright way, said he would do all he could for the Fillmore people. Remembering him, it is certain he prayed first and acted without hesitation in the firm belief he had that God being with him, who could be against him. On October 13, 1933 the *Fillmore Herald* announced in big headlines, "MRS. MARY BARD OF BERYLWOOD GIVES LITTLE REDWOOD CHURCH TO FILLMORE EPISCOPALIANS". A few days earlier on October 9, Mr. Macdougall had announced the gift to a group of Episcopalians gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stephens. At that time he told them that Mrs. Bard's gift of the church edifice was accompanied by a gift of the altar, a communion service, a chest of linens, the font and furnishings. At the same meeting, to quote the *Herald*, "which was attended by members of the Guild; and a group of men, [Mr. Clarke, Sr., W.E. Wagener and Mr. Stephens] were named as a committee to arrange for the moving of the church, planned to begin the following week." The October 20 issue of the newspaper noted that the announcement of Mrs. Bard's gift had been met with much rejoicing not only by members of the church group but by many others in Fillmore. The same issue further announced that a contract had been awarded to Bill Yeakle who, with the assistance of Ed Rice, would begin work on the foundation of the church. It was to be moved to Fillmore from Hueneme, and rebuilt on property at the corner of Saratoga and Second Sts., which had been donated to the Diocese by Mr. and Mrs. Stephens. The property, the newspaper continued, "consists of a lot and a half with frontage of 67½ feet on Saratoga and 140 feet on Second St." The Committee appointed to oversee the moving of the church reported to the newspaper "a hearty response from all those interviewed with assurance that ample money will be forthcoming to take care of all expense incurred."

HOLY HOLY HO

HOLY

Subsequently, a Mr. Seichert helped Rice, under Yeakle's supervision, in the dismantling and moving of the church to Fillmore. Rice recalls that each piece was numbered and brought to Fillmore in a pick-up truck, so heavily loaded that back roads were used to avoid arrest for overloading. There were at least a million numbered pieces all over that lot, Rice said, and it was one big job to ever get them all together again: a lot-sized jig-saw puzzle!

Many people helped ready the church for occupancy, some without any remuneration and only a few of the names of those who helped are known. Edwin Derham and Clarence Cochran did the brickwork for the foundation, Romaine and Ernest Skinner did the electrical work and the women of the church made "velvet like covers for the kneelers and had carpeting laid at the entrance and up the center aisle." Duke Clarke, Sr. "went all over Los Angeles trying to match the glass in the windows, some of which had been broken during the years the church was unused," reminisced 95 years old Mrs. Clarke. Candlesticks were given by the Clarkes as a memorial to her mother. They also gave the chandeliers. The cross on top of the church was given by the Wageners. A large Bible, presented to Mrs. Stephen's father by his Masonic friends when she was born, was given to the church and used at the Consecration Service. Non-members of the congregation were also very generous in their help. Waldo Hardison, a Presbyterian who lived on Saratoga diagonally across from the church, crossed the street at the time the roof was being put on, asked if it were paid for and offered his help. Later he contributed to the paying off of the debt as did many others in the community.

Finally the day came when the *Herald* could report that the church "had been completely rebuilt and renovated inside and out, and the pews revarnished." It was further described as "a trim little edifice, ideally located with a seating capacity of eighty." On Sunday, December 17, 1933 at seven o'clock in the evening, with "officials and Episcopalians from all over the County present" and Fillmore's ministers sitting in the chancel, Trinity Episcopal Church, Fillmore was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. W. Bertrand Stevens, Bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles. He was assisted by the Rev. George Macdougall. The Rev. G. Gammon of the Fillmore Presbyterian Church and George Power of Ventura spoke briefly. The choir from St. Paul's, Santa Paula sang. "A hundred and fifty visitors and members were present at the service and later attended a reception for distinguished visitors and guests at the Ebell Club."

The night before the Consecration Service, on Saturday, December 16, 1933 at eight o'clock in the evening, the first wedding to be held in the church since its re-erection in Fillmore united Helen Price and Thomas Powell in marriage. Mr. Macdougall "read the nuptial vows which were exchanged at the candle-lighted altar, and witnessed by more than 135 relatives and friends of the young couple. The single ring ceremony was used. The church was attractively arranged with large baskets of pink and white larkspur." (*Fillmore Herald*, December 22, 1933.)

During the week following the Consecration Service a meeting was held at which Stephens was elected Senior Warden, Clarke, Sr. Treasurer and Jack Baer Secretary. Mr. and Mrs. Clarke and Mr. and Mrs. Baer were elected as delegates to the next Convocation. Glenn Wallerstedt was appointed lay reader.

TRINITY
CHURCH

The Rev.

Reginald

Hammond

Wedding

June 16, 1934

The following Sunday night the Santa Paula and Fillmore young people joined in presenting "a very lovely Christmas Pageant; Mrs. B. de Hoyos of Santa Paula sang the offertory. It was announced that at 4 o'clock the next Sunday, Vesper Service would be held in the church." (*Fillmore Herald*, December 29, 1933)

The first Confirmation Service held in the newly consecrated church was held on Trinity Sunday, May 27, 1934. Three persons from Santa Paula and five from Fillmore: Rachel Wallerstedt (who had been baptized at her home earlier in the day) Addie Roney, Mildred Price, Baer and Don Morrison made up the class.

Beginning in January 1934, Mr. Macdougall began holding services in Fillmore every Sunday in the afternoon or evening. There is a note in the first *Register*, presumed to have been written by him which states that at the time "there was an average attendance at Sunday services of twenty, that there was a vested choir and a fine and very active Guild." At the same time a list of communicants was made, amounting to twenty-nine names. Although it was the second wedding held in the building after its removal to Fillmore, the first one after its consecration was that of Lulu Genevieve Derham and Clarence Cochran, who were married by Mr. Macdougall in the church, Saturday morning, June 16, 1934. Mr. Macdougall held his last service at Trinity Church February 24, 1935, retired from St. Paul's Church in 1950 and was elected Rector Emeritus of his Parish, a title he proudly bore until his death in June 1959.

On March 3, 1935, the Sunday following, the Rev. Reginald Hammond began holding services in Fillmore and would continue for twenty months according to the following schedule published in the *Fillmore Herald:* "9 o'clock morning service every Sunday, excepting the first Sunday of the month when Service will be held at 7:30 p.m. Holy Communion every second Sunday." Mr. Hammond lived in Ventura and, according to the newspaper, was "working in the Eastern end of the County as rural dean." The first baptism in the church did not take place until later when Sharon Kathleen Lander was baptized on Easter Sunday, April 12, 1936.

The Rev. Addis Drake
First Vicar, Trinity Mission

Sometime during the latter part of 1936, possibly in the early fall, Mr. Clarke Johnson remembers there was a meeting with the rural dean in the Richard Stephens' home, at which time it was decided to organize and ask the Diocese for Mission status. It is not known exactly what took place or on what month and day in 1936, Trinity Church became Trinity Mission, Fillmore in union with the Diocese of Los Angeles. We know, thanks again to the local newspaper, that when Mr. Hammond held his last service on October 25, there was no break in the holding of Sunday services. The Rev. Addis Drake moved to Fillmore prior to October 30, and held his first service as Trinity Mission's first Vicar on November 1, 1936. The *Fillmore Herald* extended the first resident Episcopal priest a warm welcome in its October 30 issue, and published the following notice of church services: "8:30 a.m. Holy Communion, 11 a.m. Holy Communion and Sermon." In December the newspaper carried the notice that "the Vestry will hold its regular monthly meeting at the Vicarage, 423 Second Street, on Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 7:30 p.m." Sometime during the period a Bishop's Committee had been formed, a vicarage obtained and a group of Episcopalians was now organized with responsibilities and a part in the life of the Diocese. This had taken Fillmore people forty-four years, since the first Episcopal service was held in 1892, to accomplish.

The Rectory

Mr. Drake remained with the Trinity Mission congregation until December 1939. The Rev. Gerard C. Gardner came to Fillmore February 1, 1940 and stayed with the Mission until April 6, 1947, the longest of any clergyman Trinity Church has had. The *Register of Church Services,* begun in Mr. Drake's time, shows that Mr. Gardner held many special services, including those which he began at Rancho Sespe. His entries in the Memoranda column of the *Register* are very interesting for he notes the vagaries of California climate which kept people from church. In the column is a meticulously kept record of the texts and subjects of his sermons. Grant W. Heil, a layreader, supplied during the summer.

The Rev. Dr. Kuhns came to Fillmore on August 27, 1947 as the third Vicar of Trinity Mission. Great progress was made in the church following World War II. Fortunately, Dr. Kuhns also entered events in the life of the church in the Memoranda column of the *Register.* It is noted there that in the last week of December 1947, "foundations for the Parish House put in and the work begun." Remembered are the facts that the building was paid for by Supper Club earnings and the generous help of friends and relatives of its members. Frederick Padelford, a long time member of the church and a several times vestryman was the builder. Robert Spitler, the church Treasurer, did all of the wiring without any remuneration. The Guild bought most of the kitchen and other equipment.

The same *Register* also has a memorandum that in the latter part of March 1948 the "church was renovated and opened up, new rails etc. were put in." This refers to the removal of what was the Sacristy and Vestry Room on the south side of the Sanctuary. This was done entirely at Dr. Kuhns' expense so that the Sanctuary could take up the entire width of the church. The present Sacristry was then built between the new Sanctuary and the Parish House, while the latter was still in construction.

By 1950 Trinity Mission had prospered to the extent that it could be self-supporting. On April 24, 1950 at a special congregational meeting, it was decided to petition the Bishop of Los Angeles and the Standing Committee of the Diocese

The Parish House

for permission to organize Trinity Mission as a Parish; and on April 26th permission was granted. Subsequently, on Sunday evening, May 7, 1950 at seven o'clock, the Rt. Rev. Francis Eric Bloy, Bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles, met with the members of the Mission and presided over the meeting which organized the Parish. A *Constitution* and *By-laws* were adopted. A vestry was elected consisting of Senior Warden Harry McFarland, Junior Warden Padelford, Clerk John O. Phethean, Treasurer Spitler, Elbert Graham and J. Russell Flint. Following their election, the Vestry immediately elected Dr. Kuhns as the first Rector of Trinity Parish. He was installed by Bishop Bloy before the conclusion of the meeting.

Dr. Kuhns continued as Trinity's rector until 1953 when he was granted a leave of absence during which he retired, September 30, 1954. He was elected Rector Emeritus following his retirement. Dr. Kuhns was most generous in his gifts to the parish during his ministry at Fillmore, and also after his retirement until his death August 23, 1967, including a deed to the rectory at 608 Saratoga Street in December 1954.

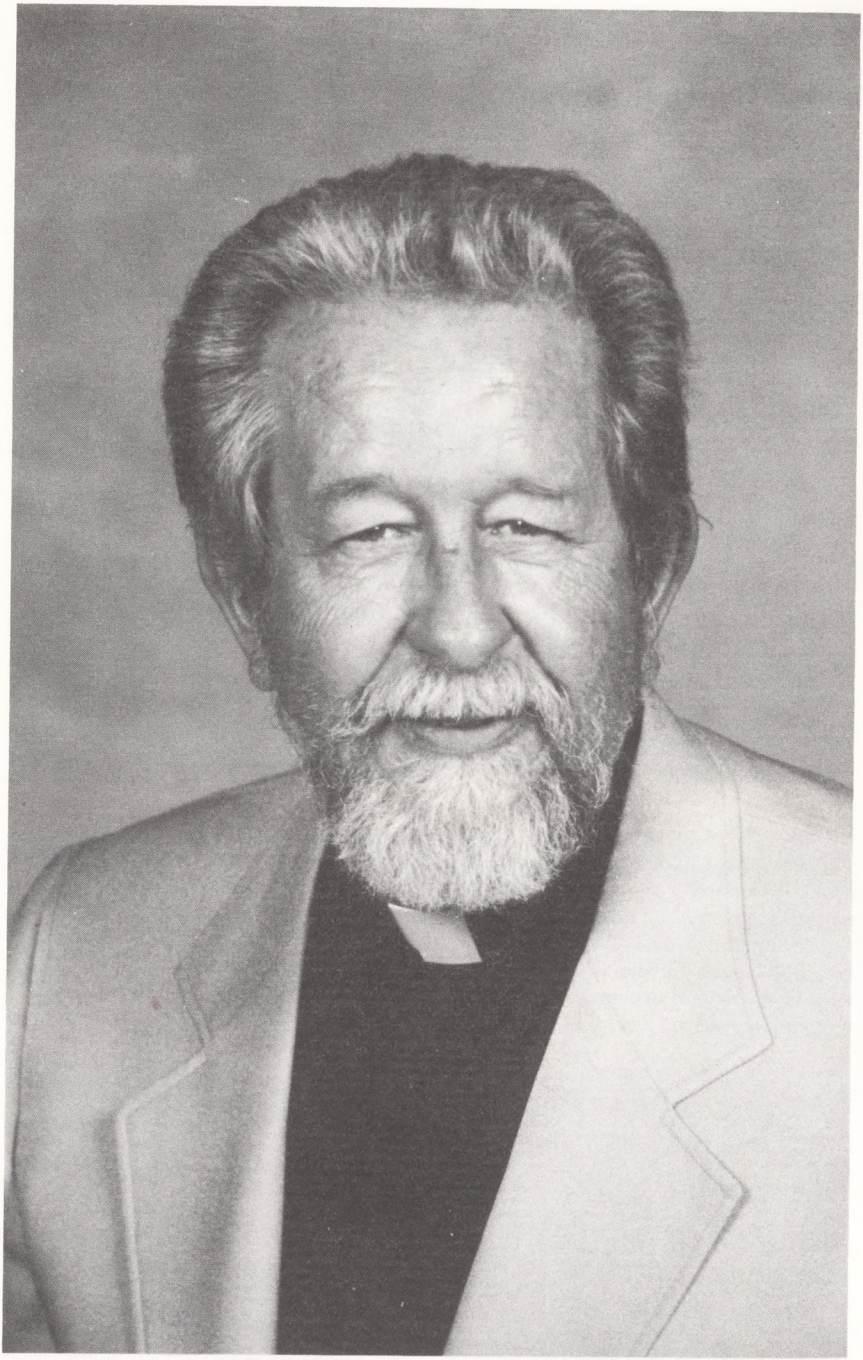
On September 15, 1953 the Rev. Russell Roberts became Assistant Rector-in-charge and when Dr. Kuhns resigned, Mr. Roberts became Rector October 1, 1954. In 1955 the Sunday School wing was built on the Parish House. The Vestry voted to designate it a Memorial to John Russell Flint. In 1956 Dr. Howarth gave the brass Celtic Processional Cross to the church. In 1952 a new organ had been installed and used for the first time on Thanksgiving Day, November 27th. In 1958 Mr. Roberts helped build a second addition to the Parish House, a room which he hoped would become a youth crafts room. It was paid for out of the Shannon Memorial Fund. It was during Mr. Roberts' time that the first Family Service was held January 2, 1955. This practice on the first Sunday of the month has been continued for many years. The Guild which had been discontinued during Dr. Kuhns' tenure, was revived and actively flourished. In June 1961 the entire community as well as the members of the Parish were greatly saddened by Mr. Roberts' sudden death.

Mr. Barta presents confirmation classes

The Rev. F. Kenneth Barta became Trinity's third Rector on September 1, 1961. Under him, a well organized Altar Guild came into being, the Sacristy was renovated (the work was done as a gift to the Church by John Goss) and altar furnishings were properly cared for. The Thrift Shop was opened in the Shannon Memorial Room, and became a steady source of income. He held training sessions for the servers and a Young Churchman's group was also organized. Mr. Barta remained with the parish until January 1, 1968 when he resigned to become a chaplain.

Bishop Rusack installs Mr. Yeaton

The fourth rector to come to Fillmore was the Rev. Gordon B. Yeaton, who began his ministry at Trinity Parish on March 1, 1968. In June 1972 he too resigned to become a chaplain. At this time there were some misgivings on the part of the congregation and Vestry as to whether or not Trinity could continue as a parish because of the financial situation. Meetings of representatives of the organizations and others were held under the guidance of Bishop Robert Rusack, who appointed the Rev. George Tripp of Ojai to meet with the committee.



The Rev. John E. Erickson
Fifth Rector, Trinity Church

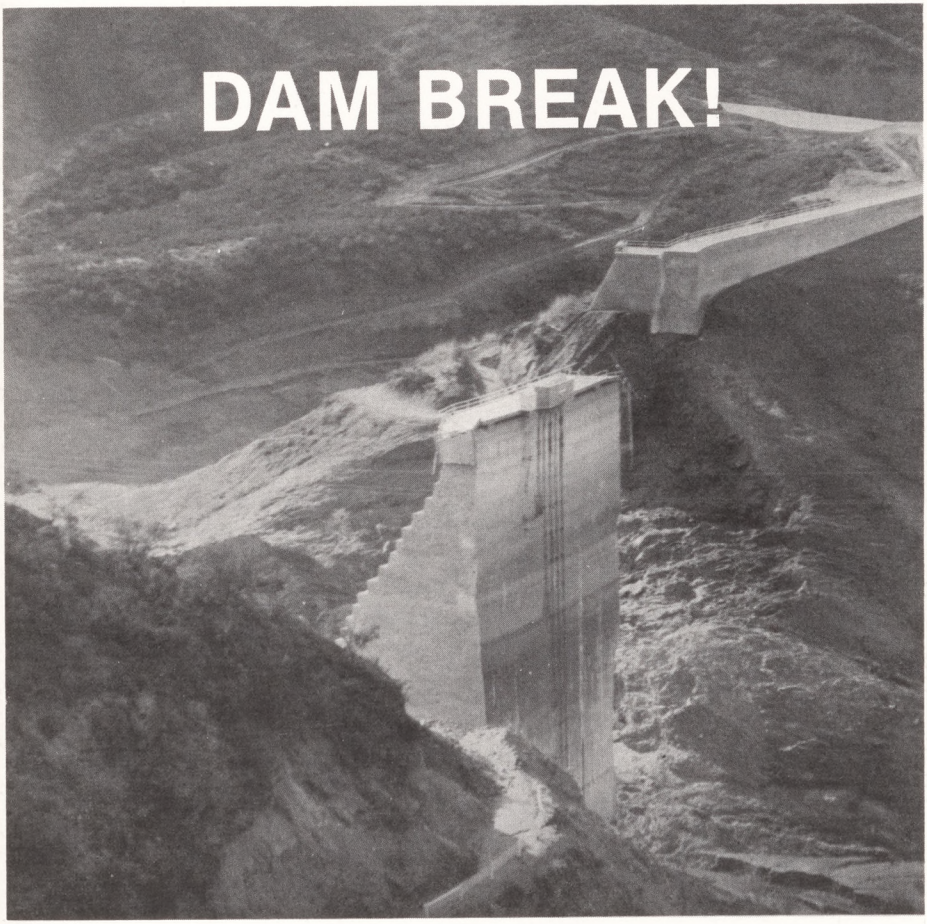
meantime, the Rev. John Erickson was asked by the Vestry to hold services during August and September. He continued through October in an endeavor to help the congregation solve its difficulties. In November, at the request of the Vestry and congregation and with the agreement of the Diocese, Mr. Erickson consented to move into the rectory and serve as Priest-in-charge on a part time basis. He began his ministry on this basis December 1, 1972.

During his tenure he attracted into the Church a number of young couples and others looking for a Church home. When Fillmore acquired a mobile home park, Trinity Parish was fortunate to have among the residents several Episcopalians. In 1975 Dr. Reginald Hammond moved to Fillmore. He had long been a licensed Lay Reader in the Church, and agreed to be Trinity's now and later, Minister of Music. In 1979 when Mr. Erickson retired from his service in Los Angeles, he was willing to stay with the Parish on a full time basis, beginning in April. On July 1, Mr. Erickson was instituted by the Rt. Rev. Rusack as the fifth full time Rector of Trinity Church.

Now the life and activities of the Parish revived spiritually: training sessions for acolytes were renewed under the leadership of Jack Hartung; a robed choir was organized; an Episcopal Church Women's group grew; the Sunday School was reorganized under competent lay leadership and staffing; a Prayer Group was started and the adult Bible Class reappeared. A salaried part time Parish Secretary was added to the staff; nursery care for small children was provided with a paid person in charge; and a part time sexton was hired. Financially the church flourished. In the Parish Hall, a room was converted into a robing and music depository room for the choir, and doors were added to the Sunday School rooms. In 1979, a new organ was purchased. This was fully paid for by 1980 with gifts.

In 1979 the Native Daughters of the Golden West designated the Trinity Church building an historical landmark. Two years later on May 3, 1981, after a plaque to this effect was placed on the inside rear wall of the church building, Mr. Erickson conducted the service of "Dedication of Trinity Church Building, Fillmore as an Historical Landmark". Many dignitaries were present including members of the Ventura County Government, Mayor of Fillmore Arthur Henry, and other local officials. In early 1981 the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board also designated Trinity Church building an historical landmark. In the late spring of 1982, Dr. Hammond was appointed Chairman of a committee to plan for the celebration of Trinity Church's fiftieth anniversary to take place in 1983.

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



QUARTERLY

VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, NUMBER TWO WINTER, 1984

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QUARTERLY

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Ventura County Historical Museum
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VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, NUMBER TWO WINTER, 1984

". . . this surging monster with its deadly cargo of debris, uprooted trees, sickening mud . . ."

THE ST. FRANCIS DAM DISASTER OF MARCH 12-13, 1928

By Clifford E. Hey

Elizabeth Blanchard, President of the Ventura County Historical Society, called me to say that the efforts of the Society's Board of Directors to re-establish the tradition of an annual Pioneer Picnic were failing because they couldn't find a speaker: They had asked almost everyone possible and no one would agree to come. So, she said, since my Pearl Harbor Day speech had been modestly successful at the Santa Paula Historical Society meeting this past Spring, she wondered if I could think up some other subject (so the Santa Paula people wouldn't stay away) and be the speaker. And, she concluded with the observation that after an hour of beer and wine in the (hopefully) hot sun of early afternoon, followed by a generous portion of tri-tip barbecue prepared by Bobby Dearmore, a renowned county chef, my remarks need only be brief, and not particularly "deep."

With that invitation I decided to accept the challenge and began thrashing around for a topic that might appeal to both the old-timers who "remember everything well," and us newcomers who weren't even here in the good old days but are at least sort of interested in historical insights into Ventura County's past.

And, after casting aside such provocative titles as "descendants of A. C. Hardison," "recent and past blunders of the Ojai City Council," "recollections of growing up in Camarillo by a lady who came there at age three weeks in 1931," and "biographical sketches of every past president of the Ventura County Historical Society," I suddenly was hit by a profound realization: Practically everyone is interested in disasters. Just consider the attention paid to such films as *The Poseidon Adventure* and *The Towering Inferno*. And see the extensive media coverage of flooding in Arizona, blizzards in Colorado, beach-front home destruction by high wave action, and the regular dose we always get of fires out of control and burning up and down the hillsides.

So I thought, why not tell about the largest disaster Ventura County ever suffered: The failure of the St. Francis Dam and the resultant tragedy that was wrought on the Santa Clara Valley. The main trouble with this subject, however, was that I knew almost nothing of the dam or its collapse. In fact, I wasn't even sure where or when it "broke." But, being optimistic, and having waited too long for the committee to seek out another program, I started through my collection of Ventura County books and began reading and reading and reading—and also looking at pictures.

The first book I turned to, naturally, was Charles Outland's extraordinarily well researched and interestingly written story of the dam entitled *Man-Made Disaster*. I read the revised edition, which was published in 1977.

Then I sought out references to the disaster in such books as Ruth Newhall's 1958 work *The Newhall Ranch*, a pamphlet entitled "The First Hundred Years in Ventura, 1866-1966," Title Insurance and Trust Company's *The Story of Ventura County (1955), The County Star:—My Buena Ventura* by Roy Pinkerton, *People—Land—Water* by Vernon Freeman, *The Water Seekers* by Remi Nadeau, C. C. Teague's *Fifty Years a Rancher*, Robert Glass Cleland's *From Wilderness to Empire*, and Willard B. Gerry's *The Gerry Story*. There were others as well; and some newspaper articles copied from the Santa Paula

Library and an entire booklet of newspaper clippings from the historical collection of the Ventura County Library, which now has its home in the Ventura County Historical Museum.

Before I get into that fateful night, let me give you some background on the dam—its origins, location, and significant geological features.

Early in the 20th century, the City of Los Angeles realized that its growth would be virtually stopped dead in its tracks if it didn't find an additional source of water. The decision was made to divert water from the Owens Valley on the east side of the Sierras. An enormously costly and complicated aqueduct was built to deliver water to reservoirs in the Los Angeles area.

Without getting into the details of construction of the 225 mile long aqueduct by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power under William Mulholland, let it simply be said that the Department's surreptitious acquistions of property with water rights in the Owens River area eventually led to its almost total ownership and control over the land and water in that area. Few Owens Valley farmers remained able to survive economically, and most of the region returned to an undeveloped state with increasingly desert-like characteristics. This infuriated the locals in the area, who saw their livelihoods cut off as the water was drained south to Los Angeles. They fought a continuing battle against the Department and its aqueduct, including threats and assaults on the pipeline.

At the north end of the San Fernando Valley is a giant flume down which water from the aqueduct rushes to an open spillway. The pipeline goes north from the spillway (at about the confluence of the Golden State, Antelope Valley, San Diego, and Foothill freeways) to the east of Newhall and Saugus—near the site of what some sources say was the first oil well in California, incidentally—and crosses over the Santa Clara River not far from the Bonelli Ranch and The Saugus Speedway. From there the water lines (there are two lines now, but I think there was only one in 1928) pass into the Bouquet Canyon area, and thence along the eastern slopes of the hillsides along the San Francisquito Canyon, and from there, up toward the Antelope Valley and beyond to the Mojave Desert.

From my readings it became apparent that, to quote Remi Nadeau in his *The Water Seekers*,

> Even while the city was being pushed to desperate lengths for water, it became aware of an undue waste caused by its power plants in San Francisquito Canyon, some twenty miles north of San Fernando Valley. Unlike water, electric energy cannot be stored; it must be sent over transmission lines and used in homes and factories at the instant it is generated by the turbines. The constant flow of water at the two San Francisquito plants was too much for the San Fernando reservoirs to hold. Much of it was dumped into the canyon bottom, there to find its way into the Santa Clara River, and eventually to run past the Ventura County towns of Fillmore and Santa Paula on its way to the ocean. This loss in the drought season was deplored by the Water Department and taken into court by at least one irate San Fernando Valley farmer.
>
> Obviously a great new reservoir site below at least one of the power plants was needed to help the San Fernando lakes in storing water for

the City's use. William Mulholland first proposed a dam in Big Tujunga Canyon at the east side of the valley. Condemnation of the reservoir site was begun, but the owners fought for an extravagant price in court. Mulholland, refusing to allow the City to be held up, had the proceedings ended. An alternate site was bought in the San Francisquito Canyon, below Power House No. 1, and construction was opened in August, 1924.

By May, 1926 the Water Department had completed the great, arch-shaped concrete structure and christened it St. Francis Dam. When filled to capacity a year later, the reservoir held some 34,000 acre-feet—almost equalling the combined volume of the two San Fernando basins. Faced with continuing drought, Mulholland had doubled the City's water storage none too soon; another dry season in 1927 made the new reservoir a veritable lifesaver for San Fernando crops.

In addition to seeking to stop the waste of water from its aqueduct system, the Department had at least two other reasons for wanting the St. Francis Dam to be where it was. The first reason is well described by Vernon Freeman in his book *People—Land—Water.* It may have been that the Department had a greedy afterthought about Ventura County's water, in spite of assurances of its absolute disinterest in the relatively small amount of water flowing down the San Francisquito Creek into the Santa Clara River and then into Ventura County. What happened was that:

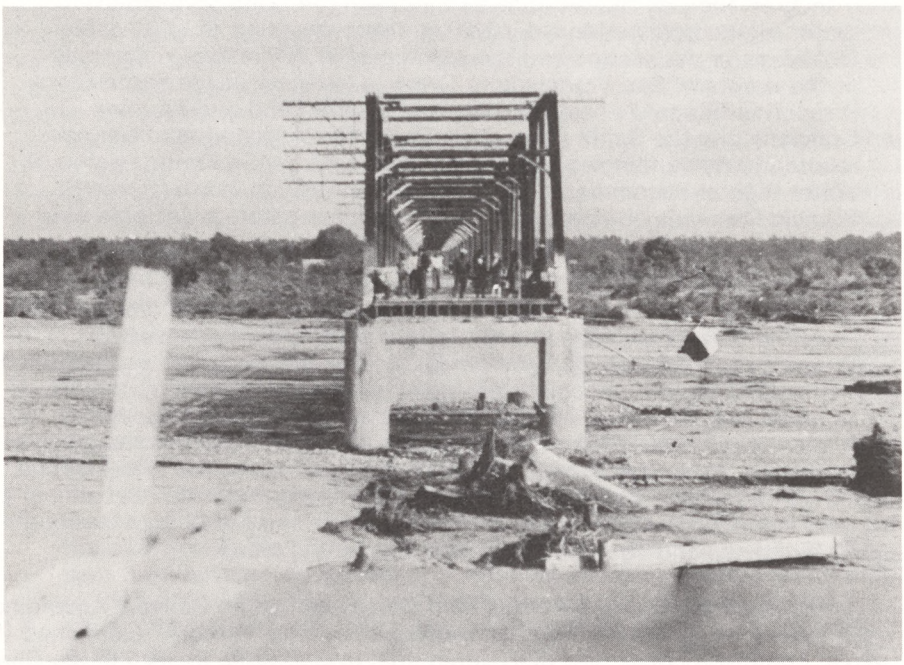
> In 1924, the City of Los Angeles filed with the State Division of Water Rights application No. 4220 for direct diversion of 1,000 cubic feet of water per second and the storage of 37,000 acre-feet annually of the waters of San Francisquito Creek, a tributary of the Santa Clara River. This filing was protested by the Newhall Land and Farming Company and the Santa Clara River Protective Association. Hearings relating to these filings and protests were held by the State Division of Water Rights. Because of delays in the proceedings, however, the St. Francis Dam was constructed and it had failed before a decision was rendered by the State Division of Water Rights.

And the second reason seems to have been a fear of Mr. Mulholland's that a continuation of the Owens Valley dispute could cut off the water to Los Angeles and leave it dependent upon its very modest storage reservoirs at the south end of the system. So, he pushed for the dam as an insurance policy against such a water stoppage. It was good that he did, for in May of 1927, approximately one year after the dam was completed and long enough for the reservoir to have been filled almost to capacity, a major charge of explosives was placed in the aqueduct near Little Lake in Inyo County. The resulting blast ripped out over 450 feet of the pipeline. The St. Francis Reservoir held almost a full year's supply of water for the City's use and it was possible to justify the dam's existence and cost almost by that happening alone.

Now, let's look at the site of the dam, San Francisquito Canyon: According to the booklet entitled "The First Hundred Years in Ventura" (published in 1955), Francisco Lopez first discovered gold in California in 1842 in the Canyon. Another book, a WPA guide to California, says that gold was first discovered in Placerita Canyon, which is near the area's first oil well and some

12 miles from the dam site. Regardless, after those early discoveries, San Francisquito Canyon was the route followed by stagecoaches going into the Mojave area, and was particularly well traveled during the life of the silver mines in the Panamint Valley.

To find the dam site, my good friend Roger Myers (who said he'd come with me if I'd buy lunch) and I headed out to Castaic Junction, turned toward Los Angeles on Interstate 5, got onto Magic Mountain Parkway, turned left on Valencia Boulevard and went up to Bouquet Canyon Road, where we turned left. About a mile up toward the hills of Canyon Country we got to Seco Canyon Road where we turned left again and proceeded on for about two miles. There, we saw the magic street sign: San Francisquito Canyon Road. Another left turn and after passing through a new subdivision we came out into the rural, mostly undeveloped San Francisquito Canyon. A few miles up the valley we finally came upon Powerplant 2 with its penstocks (pipes carrying the water) leading down the hill into the plant from the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Out in front of the power plant, some distance inside the fence surrounding the plant, is a piece of concrete from the dam the size of a boulder, with one of those bronze plaques on it. The plaque says that the dam had been one and one-half miles above here and it had failed in March, 1928, and that the plaque had been placed in cooperation with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.



The Montalvo Bridge was split in two by the unimaginable force of the slow-moving, death-dealing water.

So up the road we went, and when we finally got to the site of the dam itself, there was no mistaking it. Amazingly, the concrete footings were still there, even though they were dynamited after the disaster. They had also withstood 55 years of weathering and "treasure hunting" by passers-by. Quite a bit of the base of the dam is still standing, and we could see chunks with a smooth side that had probably been on one face or the other of the dam. We pulled at several lengths of rusting cable and re-bar, which obviously had been part of the dam's structure as well. A little water was flowing through the wreckage in San Francisquito Creek, and there were sizable trees growing in the Canyon. No longer was there any evidence of the lake which had formed behind the dam nor of water-scouring damage below the dam. But we could see several large concrete chunks scattered down the valley to a distance of several thousand feet.

On our way home, we followed as closely as we could the course the flood took when it ravaged the countryside on its way to the sea: Down San Francisquito Canyon into the Santa Clarita Valley, where it hit the Santa Clara River at about the truck-weighing station across Interstate 5 from Magic Mountain. By the time the flood got to Castaic Junction, it had taken about an hour to travel the approximate ten miles and had dropped from the height of the dam, 185 feet above stream level, to about 100 feet at the face of the flood. It then continued steadily down the Santa Clara River toward the sea, wiping out highways, homes, ranchlands and powerlines—as well as people.

The specific location of the dam has interesting geological features: To the east of the dam the canyon walls are formed of mica schist, and the west walls are a conglomerate of sandstone. The mica is, to quote Charles Outland, ". . . severely laminated . . . cross faulted, and interspersed with talc." It is this last ingredient that apparently causes the east wall to feel greasy. And the west wall is a bit unusual, too. It is of a red appearance and although it seems hard enough when dry, it absorbs water and disintegrates when soaked. In 1928 it was supposed to be reassuring to know, however, that the base of the dam rested in solid bedrock. So, the only worries were about the abutments against which the dam rested, the possibility of Owens Valley dynamite, and the San Andreas Fault—only a few, short miles away!

Well, enough of this introduction to disaster: I'll mention only in passing that there was seepage from around the dam's edges from the moment it was built, but the engineers did not express public concern. And when two cracks appeared in the face of the dam in January, 1928, it was believed that there was no worry—even though their locations indicated that the two sides had probably been moved slightly upward by the swelling abutments on which they rested. And we won't tarry long over the visit of Engineers Mulholland and Harvey Van Norman to the dam in the afternoon of March 12th, in response to a call from Tony Harnischfeger, the dam tender, that there was muddy water leakage. They concluded that it was not an indication of danger to the dam and went back to the office.

And now, a brief explanation of how the dam actually, *probably*, collapsed: The few people who were worried at all about the dam's reliability were most concerned about the west wall of the canyon (the one composed primarily of the red conglomerate that got spongy when wet), but apparently it was the op-

posite canyon wall (with the fractured mica schist, laced with talc which made it greasy) that collapsed above the dam and then below it too, sending landslides plunging down the hillside. And it was this loosening of the earth on which the east abutment of the dam rested that caused chunks of the dam to split apart from each other and fall (mostly) straight or diagonally down the downhill side of the dam. As the pieces crashed down they split the stair-step section of the face of the dam off of that center portion which remained standing. And this break in the dam's integrity caused the west side of the dam to rise up from the spongy red mass on which it rested and be thrown with such force by the water that no part of the dam wall remained in the immediate area after the flood subsided. All the pieces from the west side ended up down in the valley, some at a distance of several thousand feet below the dam site.

And now we have arrived at the night of March 12, 1928, a night with little or no moon to illuminate what occurred. What I feel is the most graphic and dramatic presentation of the dam's failure is a passage in the chapter entitled 'An Hour of Midnight Terror' in Charles Outland's previously credited book, *Man-Made Disaster.*

> March 12, 11:57½ p.m.
>
> Fifty miles to the south people who had not gone to bed saw the lights of Los Angeles flicker momentarily. The Bureau of Power and Light operators at Receiving Stations A and B noted a sharp drop in voltage for two seconds. Neither man could know that the trouble was miles away in San Francisquito Canyon, or that they had witnessed the first faint signal of disaster.
>
> At the Saugus substation of the Southern California Edison Company, however, this first manifestation of southern California's greatest tragedy was anything but faint. With dramatic suddenness the Edison transmission line to Lancaster shorted out, blowing up an oil switch in the station and bringing the resident personnel to emergency duty.
>
> Atop the mountain above Powerhouse No. 2 surgechamber attendant, E. H. Thomas, was awakened by his mother, 'I think there's been an earthquake'. They waited for a second shock, and looked at each other expectantly as the windows began to rattle. The vibrations became stronger, the windows rattled louder, and now the whole house was trembling. This was a strange earthquake! Suddenly the lights dipped to a dull glow, remained for a second or two, and then went out. Something was wrong at the powerhouse! Thomas dressed and started for the penstocks, where he could make his way down to the floor of the canyon. Below, in the canyon, Ray Rising was awakened by a roar that brought back memories of his former home in Minnesota. Tornado! Jumping from bed, he ran to the front door. Moments later a wall of water as high as a ten story building loomed up in the night, and Rising knew only that he was fighting for his life. He became the first of hundreds to experience the hell of this surging monster with its deadly cargo of debris, uprooted trees, sickening mud for its victims to swallow, and miles of entangling wire. A rooftop came floating out of the night, and Rising with a supreme effort climb-

Southern California Edison Company vehicles were swept far downriver.

ed aboard. In the twisting, narrow, canyon his impromptu raft was thrown against the mountain; and Rising jumped to safety. He began calling his wife and children, but no answer ever came. At dawn, Ray Rising met the only other survivors from twenty-eight workmen and their families living at Powerhouse No. 2, Mrs. Curtis and her two year old son.

Tuesday, March 13, 12:02½ a.m.

It had taken the liquid avalanche five minutes to travel the mile and one-half from the ruptured dam to Powerhouse No. 2. This was not the express train speed portrayed by pulp writers, but the generated destructive horsepower was impossible to visualize. With a depth varying from 100 to 140 feet for the first few miles, nothing could withstand the violence of the flood wave. Huge pieces of the dam, some weighing ten thousand tons, were washed one-half mile or more down the canyon.

Powerhouse No. 2 was a sturdy concrete building, 65 feet high, but the water was 120 feet above the floor. The massive structure was crushed as easily as an eggshell.

The rest of the story of the flood is a series of events and experiences as the waters proceeded in their march to the sea: The mass of destruction—starting at 185 feet high—swept away many homes in the gorge between the dam and Piru, most noteworthy being those of the dam tender and his family, of the workers at Powerhouse No. 2, and of the ranchers scattered along the Canyon floor.

As the tumbling, roaring mass of water came out of the Canyon and headed for Castaic Junction, it was close to 100 feet high at its face and had already taken out the Saugus Power Station. The four big electric transmission lines from Big Creek, which had been the reserve power source when the Water and Power lines had toppled were wiped out and with them all electricity down the Santa Clara River. Most of populated Ventura County was blacked out as was the City of Los Angeles.

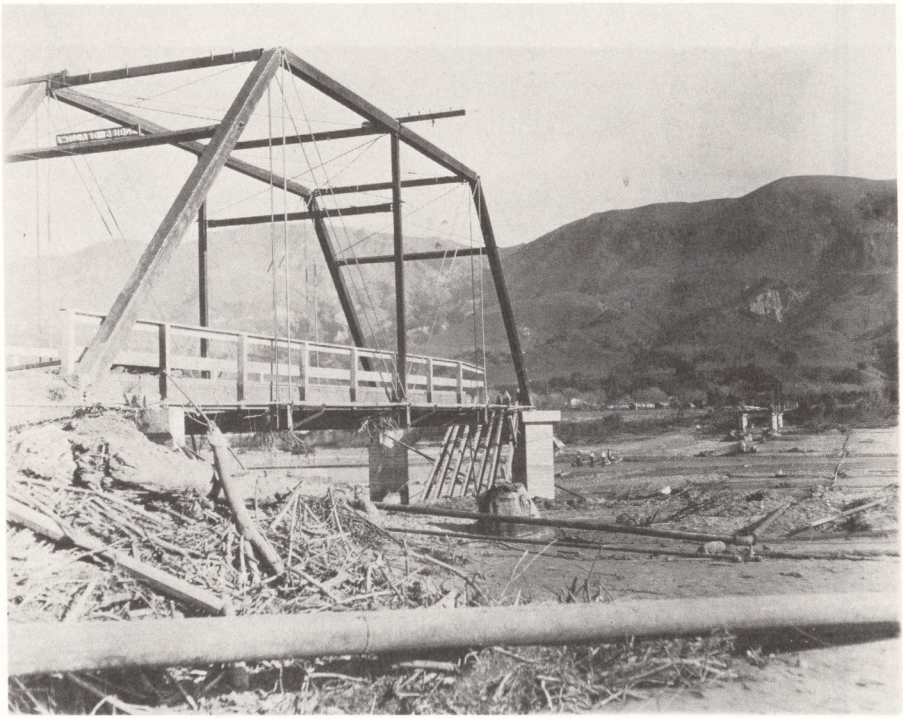
The personal miracles and tragedies had already begun to unfold. Janette Romney and other members of her family had been to a play in Los Angeles on the night of March 12th, and the family car passed through the Castaic Junction about ten minutes before the wall of water arrived there. They kept ahead of the flow of water down the Valley—the flood rate was 18 miles an hour—and didn't learn of the tragedy until they were safely home.

At the Kemp siding of the Southern Pacific railroad, a Southern California Edison Company crew of 140 men were camped safely, they must have thought, on a hillside above the Santa Clara River. They had little chance to escape the then 50 foot high flood as it swept down upon them. The only ones to survive were apparently those whose tents were tightly snapped shut; as they moved along with the flood and its debris the air-pockets within the tents seemed to have floated them to the top of the water, from where they struggled to the shore and safety.

One of the more heartwarming stories of generosity during this adversity concerns the August Rubel family, who had only recently concluded the purchase of the Rancho Camulos from the Del Valle family. Even as sections of their ranch were washing away, the Rubels offered food and clothes to the survivors and later provided equipment and workers to search the wreckage for victims and to remove the tons of debris.

Another of the heroes was Ventura County Deputy Sheriff Eddie Hearne, who was on duty at the County Jail. At l:20 a.m. — almost an hour and a half after the break — Deputy Hearne received a call from the Los Angeles Sheriff's office, which had apparently received notification of the disaster from the Edison Company. He realized the urgency of the situation and immediately took off up Telegraph Road from Ventura to warn the citizens along the route of the danger coming their way. It is interesting to note that the flood — at 50 feet — had just wiped out the Edison crew at Kemp on the Countyline when Hearne was notified, and he was able to drive at high speeds all the way to the far end of Fillmore before encountering the flood!

And, the final hero to be mentioned in this account was California Highway Patrolman Thornton Edwards, a resident of Santa Paula. Edwards was the one who, when roused by the Santa Paula telephone operator (who had received the news from the Los Angeles chief operator), began riding through Santa Paula with his motorcycle siren going, waking people and warning them to escape to high ground. He had some problems, though, both with those who only spoke Spanish (which he did not) and those to whom the impending disaster sounded more interesting than frightening. Many gathered on the Willard Bridge across the Santa Clara River at Santa Paula and waited for the spectacle. Fortunately, cooler and wiser heads prevailed and the bridge was cleared before it disintegrated into the flood. The main difficulty confronting Patrolman Edwards was the skepticism of most of the citizens that he roused from their sleep. Many Santa Paula residents barely knew that there was a dam at the higher reaches of the river; and many speculated that perhaps he

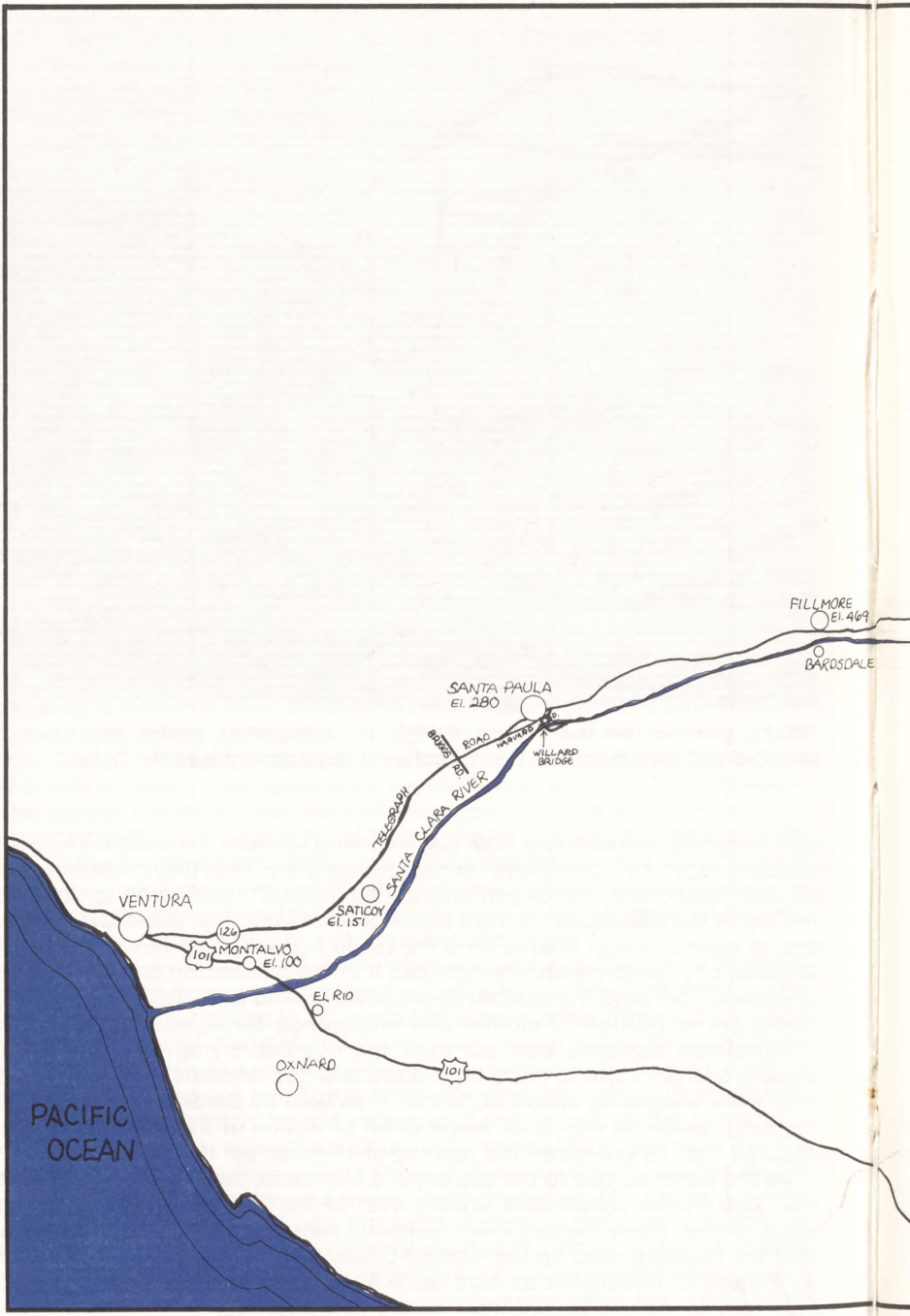


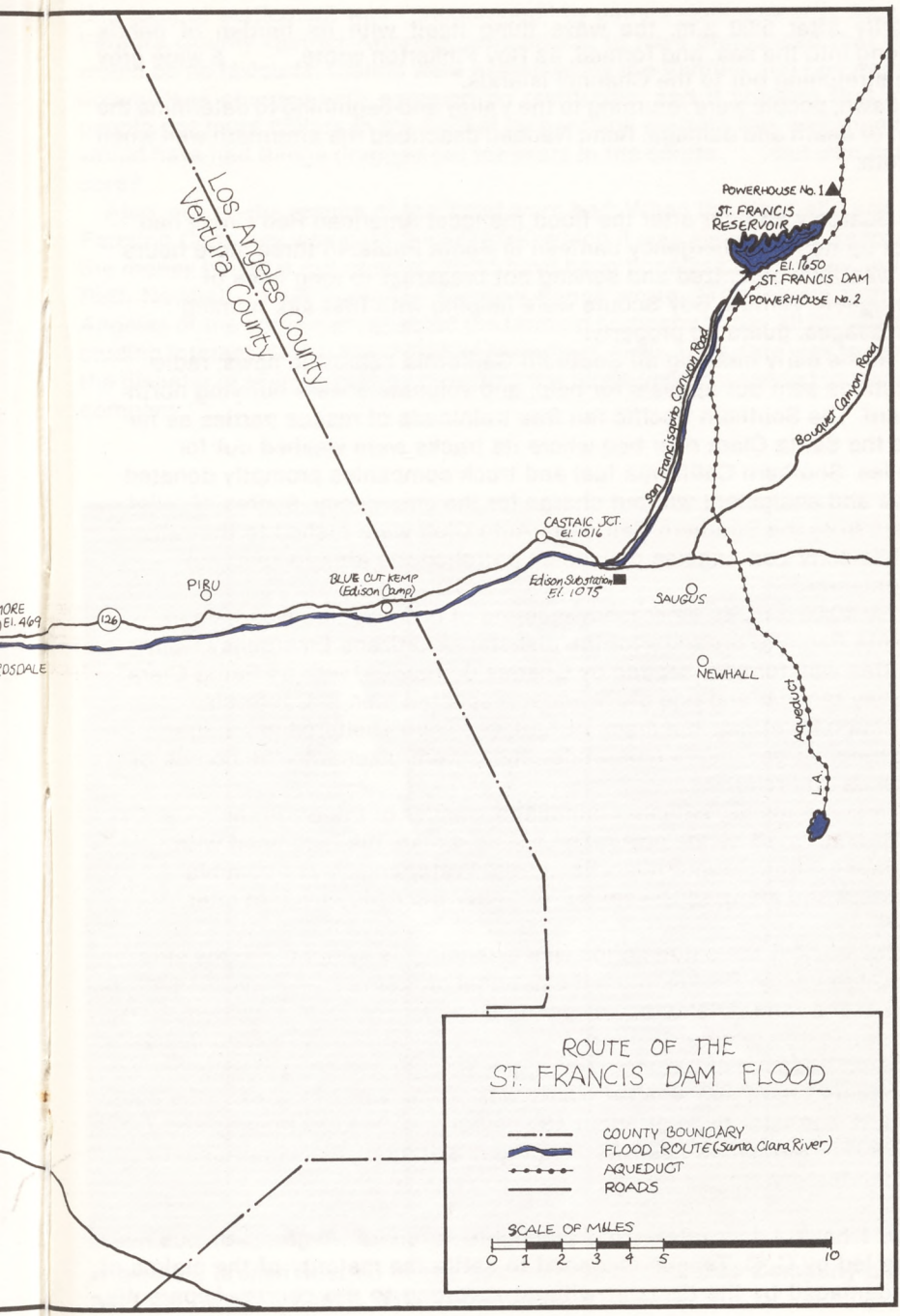
"Many gathered on the Willard Bridge. . . Fortunately cooler and wiser heads prevailed and the bridge was cleared before it disintegrated into the flood."

was referring, instead, to a tidal wave coming up from the ocean. This was the problem faced by Tom Rileys' family. Fortunately, the Rileys finally abandoned their temporarily out-of-commission car and left their home to trudge up to the top of the rise above Harvard Boulevard. Incidentally, the Rileys' home was one of several which floated onto the Isbell School playground. Although Los Angeles city funds eventually replaced it on its foundation and cleaned up the premises, Tom says the cabinet doors never closed well, thereafter, nor did the family get restitution for clothes and furnishings damaged by the flood water.

Patrolman Edwards was out near the riverbed trying to rouse the dairy owners and get them to leave their cows and flee when he encountered the 25 foot wave wallowing ahead of him as it passed by Santa Paula at 3:30 in the morning. Since he was later made Chief of Police of Santa Paula we can be assured that he out-raced the rushing-at-10-miles-per-hour flood.

As the water surged to the sea beyond Montalvo, the observers started to arrive. Bob Pfeiler remembers driving over to the Saticoy Bridge to watch the flood, and so many Oxnard Plain residents were warned to seek higher ground that the twisting road up the Conejo Grade beyond Camarillo was described as a mass of headlights as cars were filled with evacuees and driven up the hill, from where the people then waited and watched.


FILLMORE
El. 469
BARDSDALE
SANTA PAULA
El. 280
HARVARD
WILLARD
BRIDGE
BRIDGE
ROAD
TELEGRAPH
SANTA CLARA RIVER
VENTURA
SATICOY
El. 151
126
101
MONTALVO
El. 100
EL RIO
OXNARD
101
PACIFIC
OCEAN


Los Angeles County
Ventura County
POWERHOUSE No. 1
ST. FRANCIS RESERVOIR
El. 1650
ST. FRANCIS DAM
POWERHOUSE No. 2
San Francisquito Canyon Road
Bouquet Canyon Road
CASTAIC JCT.
El. 1016
Edison Substation
El. 1075
SAUGUS
PIRU
BLUE CUT KEMP
(Edison Camp)
126
NEWHALL
Aqueduct
L.A.
ROUTE OF THE
ST. FRANCIS DAM FLOOD
COUNTY BOUNDARY
FLOOD ROUTE (Santa Clara River)
AQUEDUCT
ROADS
SCALE OF MILES
0 1 2 3 4 5 10

Shortly after 5:00 a.m. the wave flung itself with its burden of debris headlong into the sea, and formed, as Roy Pinkerton wrote, ". . . a wide grey stripe stretching out to the Channel Islands."

By dawn, people were returning to the Valley and beginning to determine the extent of death and damage. Remi Nadeau described the aftermath well when he wrote:

> Scarcely an hour after the flood the local American Red Cross had set up its first emergency canteen in Santa Paula. In three more hours it was fully organized and serving hot breakfast to long lines of refugees. Ventura Boy Scouts were helping with first aid, running messages, guarding property.
>
> In the early morning all Southern California heard the news; radio stations sent out appeals for help, and volunteers were hurrying northward. The Southern Pacific ran free trainloads of rescue parties as far as the Santa Clara river bed where its tracks were washed out for miles. Southern California fuel and truck companies promptly donated gas and equipment without charge for the emergency. Scores of relief cars from the Southern California Auto Club were rushed to the valley, while sixty Los Angeles policemen patrolled the area to keep out sightseers.
>
> By 10:00 a.m. an emergency meeting of civic leaders was held in Santa Paula to organize for the disaster. A Citizens Emergency Committee was formed, headed by Charles C. Teague, veteran Santa Clara Valley rancher and one of the most respected men in California. Through its efforts hundreds of refugees were sheltered in a huge abandoned packing house, while others were taken into the homes of friends and relatives.
>
> In Los Angeles, William Mulholland, builder of the St. Francis Dam, was prostrated by the news. The tired old man, his face lined with remorse, shuffled into the office of the Water and Power commissioners and reported the calamity. 'I envy the dead,' he said later.

By the next day the entire nation was extending its sympathy to the stricken Santa Clara Valley. That morning the national officers of the Red Cross reached the scene, and a telegram of condolence arrived from President Calvin Coolidge. To the people of the nation, many of whom had experienced the slow-rising floods of midwestern rivers, this unexpected giant in the night was a strange and terrifying spectre. There was yet no way of knowing the death toll, but it was later fixed at about 400 persons, with 1,250 houses and 7,900 acres of rich farmlands destroyed—altogether one of the worst disasters in American history.

Now, I have a few interesting sidelights to share: A group of business leaders led by C. C. Teague managed to settle the majority of the claims of those damaged by the disaster without resorting to the courts. Apparently,

this form of settlement was "encouraged" by James Hollingsworth, then the Ventura County District Attorney, who seems to have announced that there would be no lawsuits. Claims were examined by the Ventura and Los Angeles committees charged with agreeing on restitution, and it appears that more people got more dollars in the pocket by handling matters this way than they would have had things dragged out for years in the courts . . . but who can be sure?

Also, not all the results of the flood were bad: When the Newhall Land and Farming Company was paid the $737,000 which it was awarded for its losses, the money bailed it out of what might have been hopeless insolvency. In fact, Ruth Newhall, in her book *The Newhall Ranch* wrote, "The receipt from Los Angeles of the settlement enabled the farming company to pay all its debts, including interest, during the month of November, 1930. Thus, fate was to mollify the disaster of March, 1928 by providing the funds urgently needed to save the company."

A twisted, broken section of the Southern California Gas Company pipeline near the Newhall Ranch, east of Camulos.

And finally, profiting from your experiences is usually a good thing: When I was in the early stages of my research for this speech, the *Ojai Valley News* ran a front page article about the Casitas Dam (located approximately five miles northwest of Ventura) headlined, "If The Dam Burst . . . County Agencies Prepare For What Is Termed An Unlikely Emergency." I learned from the story that the County Board of Supervisors had just adopted a "Dam Failure Response Plan." It's dated within a few days of 55 years exactly from the St. Francis failure, it has a drawing of the dam after the break on it's cover, and it begins:

> CIVILIZATIONS EXIST BY GEOLOGICAL CONSENT, SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.
>
> At three minutes before midnight on March 12, 1928 the St. Francis Dam in Los Angeles County collapsed. One hour and twenty minutes later a sixty foot wall of water crossed the Ventura County line. No one knew the flood was coming.
>
> When the Sheriff's Department was finally notified, people were already dead. Through an heroic effort of Sheriff's Deputies, police, Highway Patrolmen, and other public safety personnel, the warning was spread. Although many lives were saved, advance planning and earlier warning could have saved many more.
>
> With this knowledge we dedicate this Dam Failure Response Plan to those who have the responsibility to protect the people.

It then goes on to say in its preface:

> Dam failure is one of the several dangers to life in the County which calls for pre-planning and significant immediate response. The second largest disaster in the history of California occurred in 1928 when over 400 residents of Ventura County lost their lives when St. Francis Dam in Los Angeles County collapsed. The threat of seismic effect on dams in or near Ventura County was considered in developing this plan.

We who have learned of this disaster years after its occurrence, can only hope that a tragedy of this magnitude will never again befall the residents of this—or any other—county.

THE DEATH TOLL

By Patricia A. Allen

Fifty-six years have passed since the collapse of the St. Francis Dam. The exact number of deaths resulting from this disaster will never be known.

The official record of the Claims Bureau of the Citizen's Restoration Committee reported in August, 1928 that there were 224 identified deaths, sixty who were unidentified and 101 persons reported missing, for a total of 385 deaths. The records of Oliver L. Reardon, Ventura County Coroner at the time of the event, indicate that 231 bodies were retrieved from Ventura County, 88 from Los Angeles County, and 101 persons were reported missing. His total of 420 is 35 more than that reported by the committee. In addition there were charred remains of three more bodies and a partial skeleton discovered late in August which would not have been enumerated in the coroner's list. This would make 424 people known dead from the St. Francis Dam break.

The records of Coroner Reardon were meticulously kept and have been preserved in the possession of his son, Joseph, owner of the Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Chapel in Ventura.

In the earliest hours of March 13, 1928, Oliver Reardon received his first intimation of the disaster. A phone call from the Sheriff's office warned him to prepare for multiple deaths because of the collapse of the St. Francis Dam. At daybreak Reardon and his son, Joseph, who was on his Easter break from Villanova Prep School in Ojai, arrived in Santa Paula to assess the situation. The crest of the flood had passed, but there was still a sea of dirty, roiling water flowing down the Santa Clara River. Father and son were numbed by the devastation they witnessed in the early light of day. Charles Outland describes it most movingly in his book, *Man-Made Disaster: The Story of St. Francis Dam.*

> It was an unbelievable sight that a stunned Santa Paula citizenry gazed upon in the first fog-filtered rays of dawn. The lower portion of the town was the most appalling, mitigated mess anyone had ever seen. Foundations or crushed rubble were all that marked where homes had stood the night before. Orchards that had been exactly what orchards should be—trees and cleanly cultivated soil—were now the repositories of broken houses, bridge timbers, and every conceivable kind of flotsam and jetsam. A dead mule lay in the center of Harvard Boulevard, and other carcasses were soon visible in the gathering light of day. Covering everything was a thick carpet of oozy, slimy mud that made walking a hazard on sidewalks and streets.
>
> The early viewers were those who had been awakened a few hours before and ordered to flee to high ground. Most of those sleepy-eyed individuals had never heard of a St. Francis Dam, and many doubted its existense even as they fled half dressed to the hills north of town. Now they gazed silently upon the carnage wrought by the onslaught they had escaped. One man was to recall that the population was in a state of mass shock during those early moments of comprehension.

That last statement was echoed by Joseph Reardon in a recent interview when he told of plans made and hastily implemented by his father to meet the demands of the disaster. As the water receded it became apparent that their first task was to recover and care for the bodies that were exposed in the debris. These victims were coated with that same oozy mud and had to be cleansed before any identification could take place. Nine living persons were found in the debris of the river and were first thought to be dead. All but one survived.

A makeshift morgue was set up and all available personnel was pressed into service to assist in the grisly work. Farm trucks were offered by local residents to haul the bodies to the morgue, and two sheriff's deputies, Leslie T. White and Carl Wallace, were reluctantly recruited to number and photograph each body. The deputies helped put into effect the identification system, established by Reardon, which later proved so effective in assisting relatives to claim their family members. With each picture was a description which included sex, nationality, hair and eye coloring, approximate age and weight, and any other distinctive marking or any jewelery worn. The force of the water was so great that none of the victims recovered on the first day had on so much as a stitch of clothing. These painstaking records were invaluable, for many of the victims had been borne for miles by the water and debris before being deposited on the river's edge. Among them was the body of the small daughter of G. O. Hughes, the Chief Operator of Power House No. 2. Though the Hughes family had lived just below the dam, the child's body was found on the Sespe Ranch.

It was obvious that there were too many bodies to be cared for in the mortuaries of Santa Paula and Fillmore, so Coroner Reardon arranged to have them taken to every mortuary in the county, including his own in Ventura. His record book carefully notes where each body was taken. This information was added to the number and picture pasted in the book. Later notations told who made the identification and where the body was sent for burial. It was a heart-rending experience for all concerned, and many tragic stories can be pieced-together from the dozens of letter in the coroner's files.

Letters arrived from all across the nation. All requested information leading to the whereabouts of missing persons who were believed to have been in the area of the flood. A second letter from a mother of two young sons joyfully recounted that her sons had gone to Washington State to find employment and were not in California after all. Many of the letters included pictures of missing relatives. One included the plaintive request for the picture to be returned as it was the only one the mother had. Several weeks after the flood, a correspondent wrote from Los Angeles seeking her friend, a grandmother who had with her two small grandchildren. The Los Angeles resident had loaned her friend money so that she might start a small poultry ranch near Fillmore. A picture of the grandmother and her charges was included showing them seated together on the running board of a car. The small family had not been heard from since the flood.

All of the letters are preserved intact, along with the answers sent by the coroner or sheriff's office, for they worked together in solving their mutual problems of identification. At least two of the victims were claimed by relatives because of the rings they wore. One was a woman who always wore a distinctive opal ring, the other a young man whose mother described his engraved 1924 senior class ring. A young mother who was wearing a special white

nightgown was identified a month after the disaster. One grateful out-of-state wife inquiring for her missing husband wrote a second time to report that the supposed victim was *not* her husband. The coroner had written her that the victim was wearing heavy, hand-knitted underwear, and she responded that her spouse always wore BVD-style underwear of fine checked material with three buttons on the shoulder. Some of the bodies found in later months could only be identified by dental records.

Mrs. Maggie Frame, of Porterville, California, sent several letters inquiring about her three sons who had been employed at the Edison Company at Kemp. Leslie Frame was identified in May, and Vernon was found in June, but a third son was never identified. One of her letters mentioned that she had read in the paper that several of the employees of the Edison Company were identified by their company clothing badges, but this was not helpful in the case of her lost son.

Four Luna children from Bardsdale were identified by their father, whose wife also perished but was never found. They were Elvira, Esther, Lupe, and Henry. They ranged in age from one to five years old.

One hundred and one bodies were missing and never found. Reports in local newspapers, which are in the collection of the Ventura County Historical Museum Library, indicate that many of the bodies had been carried into the sea. However, only one was ever found in the ocean, and it was near the mouth of the Santa Clara River. The dirt and debris could clearly be seen nearly six miles out into the ocean. Perhaps bodies washed that far off-shore wouldn't ever return.

Coroner Reardon had made an arrangement with the City of Los Angeles to pick up and care for any bodies found by farmers along the river and in areas where heavy equipment was dredging the river bed to clear it of debris. Young Joseph Reardon worked most of the summer on this grim task. The last remains were found in August when a ranch crew up the Santa Clara River found the charred bones of three victims, a man, woman and child, in the ashes of a fire they had built to burn the trash deposited by the flood water. A picture of the remains was pasted in the record book along with the information concerning the sad discovery.

Probably the most unusual notation in the coroner's records deals with an unidentified red-headed man of about 55 years of age. He was found with his automobile, a 1922 gray Kissell touring car with wire wheels. Its chassis serial number was 464412, and its engine number was 456245. Even with this detailed information, the man was never identified, and his unclaimed remains were buried at Ivy Lawn Cemetery near Ventura.

The City of Los Angeles paid all expenses associated with the burial of those three hundred-plus victims. They observed the wishes of the deceaseds' loved ones and shipped the bodies to any place in the United States where the survivors wished to have them buried.

A list of the dead has been compiled from the coroner's records and newspaper accounts of the day. It is not complete, but it is as correct as possible.

Victims of the St. Francis Dam Disaster of March 12—13, 1928.

Alvarado, Mrs. Crisostomo
Alvarado, Inez
Alvarez, Jesus
Alvarez, Mrs. Jesus
Alvarez, Julia
Alvarez, Ramon
Alvarez, Ynez
Anderson, C. M.*
Anderson, Timothy
Andrews, Timothy*
Asher, Jessie A.

Barry, Scotty John*
Berry, Harley S. (Chief Mechanic, Power House # 2)
Bianchi, Frank*
Boardman, Florence
Boardman, Grace T. (Mrs.)
Brasola, George M.
Bryson, J. H.*
Burns, Child
Burns, Child
Burns, Harry
Burns, Mrs. Harry (Mary)
Burns, Louis M.
Burns, Mrs. Louis M.
Burns, Son

Calahan, J. C.*
Capello, Tony
Carrillo, Adolfo
Carrillo, Mrs. Jesus
Carrillo, Jose
Carrillo, Juan
Carrillo, Matildo
Carrillo, Senona
Carter, C. W
Cerna, Hypolito
Cesena, Philip
Chesney, A. V. (Bert)*
Coe, Homer (Power House #2)
Coe, Nora (Mrs.)
Coffer, Ellen
Colburn, Walter J.*
Costamagna, Mat
Cowden, Alice
Cowden, Baby
Cowden, Corrinne (Mrs. Earl)
Cowden, Earl
Cowden, Margarite
Cowden, William Dee
Crasbeg, Mat
Crumley, Ed*
Cummings, Gordon
Cummings, Mavis

D'Arcy, Philip* (USN)
De Shields, Richard*
Doty, Jim Oscar*
Duke, Van Wallace*
Dyment, Roy A.*

Eliason, C. E.*
Elliott, Morris*
Ely, Aaron
Ely, Mrs. Aaron
Ely, Child
Ely, Child

Frame, Leslie*
Frame, Vernon*
Frazer, Melvin
Frazer, Minnie

George, W. R.*
Gottardi, Mrs. Francisco
Gottardi, Joe
Gottardi, Pauline
Gottardi, Richard
Gottardi, Rino
Grantham, S. D.*
Gregson, Paul*
Guetler, A. J.*
Guitterez, Andres

Halen, Jane G.
Halen, Kenneth*
Halen, Leon John

Harter, C. W.
Harter, Marian (Mrs. C. W.)
Holt, Howard
Holt, Mary C. (Mrs. Howard)
Hopp, Child
Hopp, Ferrell (BP&L)
Hopp, Mrs. Ferrell
Hughes, Barbara
Hughes, Child
Hughes, G. O.
Hughes, Mrs. G. O.
Hungerford, Joseph Paul*
Hunich, Jefferson
Hurst, Doyle*

Imus, Myron Dale
Imus, Violet (Mrs. Earl)
Isaacs, Child
Isaacs, Child
Isaacs, Child
Isaacs, J. R.
Isaacs, Mrs. J. R.

Johnson, Rex*
Jones, Bert L.*
Jones, Harry*

Kennedy, Child
Kennedy, Child (and nurse)
Kennedy, Thomas
Kennedy, Mrs. Thomas
Kelly, Dolores
Kelly, Mrs. Ida M.
Kelly, Phyllis
Kern, Raymond (BP&L)
Kerns, Inez Hewitt
(Alias Mrs. Gordon Cummings)
Kerr, Earl (BP&L)
Kimball, Gerald A*
Kingston, John James*
Kleiman, Joachim

Lagerman, George*
Lawson, Andrew*
Layton, Clayton W.
Ledbetter, O. T.*
Locke, Edward*
Ludloff, George T.*
Luna, Elvira
Luna, Esther
Luna, Henry
Luna, Lupe

McCarty, Bessie (Mrs.)
McCarty, Charles Edgar
McCauley, Milford
McCauley, Stanton
McIntyre, A. C. (Castaic Junction
Cafe & Service Station)
McIntyre, Joseph
McLain, B. J.*
Martinez, Joe
Martinez, Mrs. Joe
Martinez, Jose
Martinez, Juan Moroa
Martinez, Maria
Martinez, Rose
Massetti, Paul*
Mathews, J. Carl (BL&P)
Mathis, Harry (BL&P)
Miyagi, Motoye
Mondlock, Nick*
Monorez, Tevania

Parker, Ida Marie Bloemers
Pegovare, Pete
Perez, Antonia
Perez, Jessie
Perez, Maria Bravo (Mrs.)
Pike, Felda Smith (Mrs.)
Pike, Mr.
Pike, Son
Porter, Charles O.*
Porter, Frank*

Richesin, Monroe K.*
Ritchie, Edward James*
Rivera, Albert
Rivera, Pedro
Rivera, Robert
Robertson, L. G.
Rogers, Chester
Rogers, Doris
Rogers, Margaret June
Rogers, Richard
Ruiz, Henry
Ruiz, Martin

Ruiz, Mary
Ruiz, Ramon
Ruiz, Susan

Samaniego, Matilda
Samaniego, Santana
Savala, Mrs. Carlotta
Savala, Concha
Savala, Fred
Savala, Mrs. Fred
Savala, Jose
Savala, Rose
Savala, Steve
Shea, Thomas*
Stephens, Grace
Stevens, David S.
Stevens, Mrs. D. S.
Stevenson, Grace

Taylor, Fred*
Topley, Mrs. Rosetta
Torrez, Carmen
Torrez, E.
Torrez, Mrs. Isabella
Torrez, Marie
Torrez, Mercede
Traxler, Baby
Traxler, Mrs. Emma Ida
Truesdale, Addie

Van Meter, Lester*
Velasco, Librado
Vickroy, Edward E.
Voelker, Henry J.

Weinland, Baby
Weinland, William Y.
Weinland, Mrs. W. Y.
Westbrook, Orval R.*
Whitehead, Sarah
Wilmot, Baby
Wilmot, Mrs. Oscar
Wilson, Andy (Alias O. A. Hylton)
Wilson, E. W.*
Wolfe, C. L.*

*Edison Company Employee at Kemp.

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Mrs. Philip Bard
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中國人

QUARTERLY

VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, NUMBER THREE SPRING, 1984

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QUARTERLY

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—by Margaret Jennings

Photographs from the Ventura County Historical Museum collection.

The cover illustration is a photo-greeting card inscribed, "Mr. and Mrs. Yong Kay, Miss Catherine Victoria Yong Kay, 242 Joice St., San Francisco, Cal. with best wishes to Hon. Thomas R. Bard and family from Yong Kay. May 18, 1912."

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, NUMBER THREE SPRING, 1984

This issue is lovingly

dedicated to the

memory of

Miriam Knox Dudley

January 25, 1891

Las Posas, Ventura County, California

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

May 26, 1984

Ventura, California

She enriched our lives.

THE CHINESE IN VENTURA COUNTY

By Margaret Jennings

The Chinese came to America in the mid-nineteenth century for many of the same reasons as motivated immigrants from Europe. Their homelands were in the throes of economic and political upheavals. Employment was scarce, freedom was restricted and advancement was nearly impossible. But, unlike the Western and Eastern Europeans who sought refuge on our shores, the Chinese did not plan to stay in America. They intended to work hard, become rich, and go home in honor. They did not subscribe to the "American Dream," and they did not necessarily accept "American" values. Such attitudes created more problems for the Chinese in America than they might otherwise have had—even given the somewhat racist nature of America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

When the Chinese started arriving on the West Coast in significant numbers, they were very welcome indeed. The Gold Rush was on, and railroad construction was reaching a fevered pitch. The Chinese are hard and willing workers; and their labor was needed for the expansion of the American West. Ship's Masters on the Pacific routes were promoting Chinese emigration by distributing maps and placards advertising the "Golden Hills" of California.

At first it looked as though everyone would profit from Chinese immigration. But as the population pressures on the East Coast of America built up, and as more of the "European" Americans began to come West, the Chinese found themselves excluded from many of the privileges of residency and citizenship.

A BRIEF HISTORY

A brief review of the history of Chinese/American immigration and citizenship policies presents a confusing picture of bigotry, deceitful behavior, flagrant abuses of international law, mixed with brave and proper conduct by some private individuals and public officials.

In 1844, the Treaty of Hwangsia formalized commercial exchange between China and the United States; and opened the doors for immigration between the two countries. And by 1850 the

California mining laws were penalizing all foreigners, but especially the Chinese. All foreign miners, except the Mexicans and Indians, were required to pay $20 per month for a license to work a claim. Given the vagaries of mining and the general economy, this law effectively prohibited foreigners from working California mining claims. This fee was repealed in 1851, and replaced with a $3.00 per month charge in 1852. As early as 1855 there was a California statute prohibiting Chinese, Negroes, and Indians from testifying against whites. That statute was repealed in 1872. But a law prohibiting the inter-marriage of Chinese and Caucasians was not repealed until 1948.

Anson Burlingame, America's Minister to China from 1861 to 1867, negotiated, in 1868, the Burlingame Treaty—a facilitation of Chinese immigration to America. And in 1871, in riots in San Francisco, twenty-one Chinese were killed; and in Los Angeles, fifteen Chinese were lynched and six shot to death.

Much of the anti-Chinese agitation was really anti-cheap-labor, led by Dennis Kearney, President of the Workingman's Party. It was said that in 1871 in California there were three men available for every job. As the unemployment pressures increased so did the repressive rules and laws governing the Chinese in America.

San Francisco's Supervisors, in 1876, proposed the "Pigtail Ordinance" wherein the hair of all convicted male prisoners was to be cut to within 1 inch of their scalps. The mayor vetoed the ordinance as being unjustifiably cruel. But in that same city the Chinese were forbidden employment in any public works project. And in that same year, an irrigation district made up of the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, and Tulare barred any Chinese from work in the construction of a ditch or canal. A law passed in 1878 made the Chinese ineligible for business licenses. California's second Constitution, ratified in 1879, forbade the employment of Chinese in State, County or Municipal jobs. It was against the law for Chinese aliens to own property in California—a law not repealed until 1913. And Chinese children could not attend public schools unless the parents of white children did not object.

Some of the taxes and levies were imaginative, if bizarre, in their means of separating out the Chinese for "special" attention. The quarterly fee for a one-horse laundry cart was $2.00; for a two-horse cart, $4.00; but for a no-horse cart—the kind most commonly employed by Chinese laundrymen—the quarterly fee was $15.00.

The governments of China and the United States vacillated on immigration and commercial policy during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In 1879 the U.S. Congress passed an act restricting Chinese immigration. President Hayes vetoed it. The Angell Commission, in 1881, negotiated a treaty with China to permit immigration of teachers, students, merchants and travelers—but not laborers. China refused to ratify the Bayard Treaty of 1888, which sanctioned prohibiting the immigration of laborers for 20 years. The Exclusion Act of 1882, the Scott Act of 1888, and the Geary Act of 1892 re-affirmed America's unwillingness to accept Chinese laborers as immigrants or the wives and children of laborers already in America. An 1894 treaty ruled out the immigration of laborers for ten years; but in 1904, the Chinese would not renew it. And because the United States strictly enforced its policies, China, in 1905, began a boycott of American goods.

Some Chinese entered this country illegally; but many more were brought in with the agreement of our government (if not our people) by six Chinese labor contracting companies. They were: Ning Yung, 75,000 immigrants; Hop Wo, 34,000; Kong Chow, 15,000; Yung Wo, 12,000; Sam Yup, 11,000; and Tan Wo, 4,300.

We do have some statistical information on the number and employment of the Chinese in America from about 1848 forward.

The population of Chinese men and women in California:

YEAR	MEN	WOMEN
1848	2	1
Feb. 1849	54	1
Jan. 1850	787	2
Jan. 1851	4,018	7
Jan. 1852	7,512	8
May 1852	11,787	7
Aug. 1852	18,026	14
1876	110,000	6,000

Chinese in the United States:

1890 = 107, 488 1910 = 71,531

Chinese agricultural workers in California as a % of the total:

1870 = 90% 1880 = 75% 1930 = <1%

Central Pacific Railroad Company mechanics and laborers:

Total = 25,000 Chinese = 15,000

Chinese-owned farms in the U.S. in 1920 = 57

CHINESE IN VENTURA

In Ventura the public attitudes toward the Chinese followed the common, accepted patterns. The earliest known reference to them is in an 1866 letter from Thomas Bard in which he refers to "Tartars" at a Fourth of July celebration.

By City ordinance in the 1880s, the Chinese community was limited to a four block square area south of Main Street and west of California Street. Chinatown in fact was located on what is now Figueroa Mall between Main and Santa Clara Streets. The community was established in the early 1870s and had ceased to exist by the 1920s. By 1876 there were strong efforts being made to evict and displace the approximately 200 residents of Chinatown. Punitive taxation was one method used—each wash house and laundry was required to pay $60.00 per annum, an extravagant sum at a time when a man's three-piece suit cost $8.00, a good white shirt could be bought for a dollar, and a white school-teacher was paid $53.00 per month. It was during this time that the Chinese Fire Company was formed. The Chinese could be fairly certain that the City's white fire company, the Monumentals, would not assist at a fire in Chinatown. However, the Chinese Fire Company did, routinely, answer the call at fires outside of their community. The *Ventura Daily Free Press* reported in 1903 that the Chinese had put out the fire at Justice L. F. Eastman's office even before the Monumentals arrived on the scene. A photo and descriptions from the time show us a two-wheeled hose cart, 100 feet of hose and twelve men uniformed in umbrella shaped straw hats, blue trousers and smocks. The Company was active for at least 30 years.

Chinatown, on Figueroa Street, around 1890.

Ventura's Chinatown had begun to crumble in 1906 when the Chinese were forced to move most of their dwellings onto Main Street, near Ventura Avenue, on property owned by George Mon Lai and Harry Bock. A few structures remained on the east side of Figueroa; they were not moved because they were built on land owned by a Chinese merchant. But the rest of Ventura's original Chinatown was destroyed. The Sanborn Map of 1906 shows only fourteen dwellings in the new Chinatown, indicating that many of the Chinese had departed the area before or during the uprooting of their homes. On May 8, 1923, George Mon Lai, and Harry, Bennie, Nellie and Lee She Bock sold the property on which New Chinatown was built to Ward J. Crandall. The 1928 Sanborn map has a vacant lot at that location.

The first sure evidence of Chinese businessmen in Ventura is in the listings in the 1898-99 City Directory. Two restaurateurs were mentioned: Lum Toy, the proprietor of the American Kitchen on Main Street, west of Palm; and Ng T. Esing, the proprietor of the U.S. Restaurant, also on Main, west of Palm.

In the 1910-11 Directory there were three entries for 'Chinese merchandise': Kun Wo & Company—411 Main Street; Tong Guy—409 Main Street; and Yuen Wing Tai—407 Main Street. There were two laundries: S. H. Toy—The Anacapa Hotel; and Wing High—519 Main. Wong Lee and Wong Sam were listed as cooks at the Anacapa Hotel. Neither Lum Toy nor Ng T. Esing were in this Directory.

An additional listing in 1912-13 was Sam Wo, laundryman—914 Santa Clara. The Wongs, Tong Guy, and S. H. Toy were missing from this edition.

By 1916-17 Sam Wo was doing very well. He had his original laundry on Santa Clara and one at 444 Saviers Road in Oxnard. New entries in this year were Wo Hing, laundryman—419 Main; Hing Soo Hoo, a restaurant at 701 Main, Frank B. Bock, a waiter in S. H. Fook's restaurant. Mr. Bock lived at 407 Main. The restaurant was located at 701 Main, and Mr. Fook lived at 509 Santa Clara.

In the 1918-19 listings the only new ones were Hong See and Lee Hong. They were shown as being in the armed forces and had no residence or business addresses. And along the way we lost Frank Bock, Hing Soo Hoo, Kun Wo, and Sam Wo.

It was all new listings in 1921-22: Hung Lee was a patient at County Hospital; Sam Sing, a cook at 307 Figueroa; P. H. Toy had a

restaurant at 525 Main; How Soo Hoo was a laundryman—419 Main; and Yen Lo Yee lived at 419 Main.

Wo Hing was back in 1926; running a hand laundry at 211 Main. And he was alone. There were no other Chinese surnames in the Ventura City Directory for 1926.

We can certainly assume that not all the Chinese merchants elected to be listed in the City Directory. We can further assume that some liberties were taken with their names. Sam Wo and Wo Sam show up in the same profession at the same address. Wing High is also Wing Hai, and Wing Hi. Yuen Wing Tai and Wing Tai Yuen are certainly one-and-the-same. Still, we can see that the Chinese population of Ventura did shrink in the third decade of the twentieth century.

NEWSPAPER REPORTS

Shrill and scornful opinions of the Chinese were fully and unambiguously expressed by the newspapers of that day. *Ventura Signal* October 15, 1875, "The slop from these (wash and ill-fame) houses is liable to breed a pestilence . . . We trust that the law declaring all Chinese wash and slop houses a nuisance may be rigidly executed. If so, there will be no resort to violent measures." And then, on April 15, 1876, the *Ventura Signal* reported, "Messers. Blackburn, Riggen, and Brooks have moved the last of the Chinese wash houses off of Main and Figueroa Streets. The gentlemen with a laudable spirit of enterprise cleaned them all out. They deserve the thanks of the entire community. A handsome building will soon be erected in place of the old shanties." This account must have been greatly exaggerated; there were Chinese buildings on at least the west side of Figueroa until 1921.

An article in the *Ventura Free Press* of September 15, 1877, referred to the Chinese as "animals" and held the fervent hope that whites should not have to compete with the "Mongolians" for wages. The author denounced the way Chinese men lived here without their families. ". . . around their dingy cabins are seen no children, no wives and mothers within, nothing is sacred or worth living for." The writer, who had visited a Chinese farm camp, averred that one camp of that sort was one more than California needed.

Ventura Signal, August 23, 1884, "Chinatown is served by a ditch to the beach, its filth carried away and sewer regularly flushed with

clean water, there are no pools of stagnant water standing about. . . . It is far better to keep the filthy heathen together where their dirt can be disposed of in bulk rather than to scatter it through the residence portions of the town."

Ventura Signal, January 8, 1885, . . . at a meeting of the Anti-Chinese League at Spears Hall to elect permanent officers, "It is not fair that white laboring men and women cannot gain employment instead of the Chinese." On January 1, 1886 this same paper reported an anti-Chinese mass meeting at the Union Hall.

Ventura Free Press, January 26, 1887, "Jim Dunlop was so determined that the Chinese must go that he drove a load of them at such a rapid rate from the depot to Chinatown that in turning the corner of Main and Palm, his wagon careened and several Chinamen spilled out, some of them being bruised."

The Vidette, January 31, 1891, an advertisement . . . "we have all kinds of fresh bakery goods . . . No Chinese Employed."

Ventura Weekly Free Press, May 19, 1893, "At their regular meeting on Tuesday evening, Company D indulged in a street drill. During the march they tramped down through the Chinese quarter. Having in mind the recent decision of the Supreme Court, the denizens of the place evidently thought their time had come and they were to be marched to the wharf and loaded on one of Fazzio's (sic) boats for deportation to China. At any rate they scattered in all directions, tumbling pell-mell into the houses, barring the doors and extinguishing the lights . . . We were under the impression that the march through Chinatown was not accidental but a scheme of Lt. Browne's to frighten the Chinese, which certainly worked."

Ventura Free Press, February 10, 1905, "Chinese New Year was ushered in at midnight Thursday with all the pomp and ceremony customary with the Celestials. At the midnight hour there was the usual din and rattle of firecrackers and bombs and sufficient powder was burnt and noise made to drive off the devils that would have infested Chinatown for another year. The New Year is a great event for the Chink. Then he dresses up in good clothes, if he has any, throws care to the wind and enjoys himself to his heart's content. His debts are paid and if he has anything over he plays fan tan and blows it all in. The celebration lasts three days."

The local papers did carry less inflammatory items about the Chinese. The *Ventura Signal* of April 14, 1871, mentions that a "Brigade of Celestials" worked on the canal bringing water to Ventura. And in the same paper on July 21, 1877, "Sam Long, a

Ah Chang, a Ventura merchant.

Chinaman, has fifteen men employed in cutting mustard, near Santa Paula. One man will cut each day about 80 pounds of seed. After being cut the seed is threshed out with flails on wagon sheets. Each man will make about $2 a day. The Chinamen, though a nuisance in many respects, have their uses. They certainly give us some wholesome lessons in industry and economy."

Ventura Weekly Free Press, January 26, 1900, reported that in anticipation of Chinese New Year, Chinese laundrymen and vegetable peddlers had for some weeks been handing out choice lily bulbs to their lady patrons.

The *Vidette* told of the arrest of six Chinese and two whites for smoking opium on March 6, 1891. Also in 1891, on May 21st, the *Ventura Weekly Free Press* published that Ge-Wah-Ho attempted to kill Ah Chun and was sent to jail. *TheVentura Free Press* of February 26, 1903 wrote that burglar Fong Sing, formerly a domestic cook, was arrested for many burglaries committed in Chinatown. He was found hiding in a joss house. The same newspaper reported on February 5, 1904, that a Chinese woman had attempted to smuggle opium to prisoners. And on July 29, 1904, they told of a problem with merchants who smuggle Chinese aliens to the Channel Islands and then land them in small boats on the coast between Ventura and Santa Barbara.

In another article, on June 10, 1904, the *Ventura Free Press* announced the shipment of fifteen bales of seaweed by local Chinese to San Francisco.

Ventura Democrat, December 12, 1905, "R. E. Brakey is busy transplanting the East side of Chinatown, and two buildings were moved yesterday to be anchored back of the remodeled adobe on Main Street, near the Avenue. All the eastern portion of the Chinese quarter will be torn down or moved out in sections. The home of the Celestial, laid bare, is not an inviting spot to look upon, and the purifying process now going on will prove the salvation of Figueroa Street." The *Ventura Democrat* also confirms that the business enterprise of Kung Wo relocated from Figueroa to Main Street. They further reported, on July 25, 1905, that Sing Hing bought the Ortega Adobe and surrounding property as a possible site for New Chinatown. And then, on August 2, 1921, the *Ventura Daily Post* told of Sing Hing being forced to demolish his buildings on the West side of Figueroa Street.

On January 11, 1901, the *Ventura Weekly Free Press* covered the death of Gin Lock and his funeral service at the Congregational Church. Fifty people showed up for the service, only four of whom were Chinese. The fourteenth anniversary of the Chinese Mission in Ventura was reported by the *Ventura Free Press* on March 22, 1903. The observances were held at the Congregational Church, with songs, speeches and Bible readings by the Chinese students.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The local Chinese community was closely linked to the Ventura Congregational Church. Church records show that, "The Chinese School (established in 1889) sponsored by the Church and supervised by Dr. W. C. Pond representing The American Missionary Association was flourishing. Four members of the Soo Hoo family were baptized and received into membership on August 4, 1899. Ye Ock and Soo Ah Gah were among the nine new

members." In 1893 Sen Sen On, Tin Toon Sing, Soo Soo Toy and Fong Yet were baptized.

Mrs. Clara Williams, Chairperson of the Chinese Mission Committee, wrote in 1901, ". . . that the church has expended on the Chinese Mission work $80.53 during that past year. We have provided Bible story papers for the teacher to use in her work among the women, and quarterlies for use in the school."

A servant of Thomas R. Bard in a United States Army uniform.

And from Mrs. L. M. Bissell, the teacher at the Chinese Mission School, a report dated January 15, 1902. "It was supposed that all members of this church are acquainted with the history of Ventura's Chinese Mission and know that the night school has been supplied with a regular teacher for the past year. During the summer months the attendance was very small, from the fact that Ventura does not furnish employment for the Chinese and they must seek it elsewhere. . .

"A steady advance in English reading and writing is noticeable, and sometimes a pupil asks instruction in arithmetic or grammar. The Bible School average for nearly 10 months is five, and over,

with an encouraging interest, of late, among the pupils. An organist adds to the success of the school for some pupils will attend for the music, getting from the hymns a ray of Gospel light. . .

"Five Mission boys united in May with this church, giving evidence of renewed hearts and seeking for better things. Esing was an earnest Bible student and faithful to every trust. Besides the night school the Chinese women have been reached in their homes. Mrs. Hsing is grateful for lessons three times a week. Mrs. Bock appreciates the friendly call . . ."

The Congregational Church records are among the best sources of names of Ventura's Chinese residents. This is a (presumably) partial list: Soo Hoo Hing (died 1899), Soo Hoo Dong (died 1889), Soo Hoo Sing Kay (d. 1889), Soo Hoo Bow (d. 1891), Ye Ock (d. 1891), Soo Hoo Gah (d. 1895), Fong Mon Han, Linn, Time Kee, Sen Sen On (d. 1893), Gin Goon Sing (d. 1893), Soo Soo Foy (d. 1893), Fong Yet (d. 1893), Tin Toon Sing, Soo Soo Toy, Soo Ah Gah, Soo Ah Yah, Fong Mon Hau (d. 1891), Lum Tim Kee (d. 1891), Yong Wah Goon (d. 1894), Ny You (d. 1897), Soo Hoo Wah (d. 1898), Gin Lock (d. 1899), Ng T. Esing (d. 1901), Ng Ye Sing (d. 1901), Hoo Sam Choy (d. 1901), Chin Jung (d. 1901), Frong Hoo Ching (d. 1902).

The Chinese Mission closed during 1908, having, they said, "fulfilled its purpose of education and integration into American life . . ."

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Some of the best, most interesting information on the local Chinese communities is provided by the reminiscences of county pioneers. Regrettably, it is difficult to date these very personal histories.

The Chinese who lived in Ventura County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made a lasting impression in the minds of long-time residents. Some of the views are scarred by old, sad prejudices and fears. But in the cases where the Chinese were seen and treated as individuals a mutual affection and respect was established that continues to this day.

Mary J. Huning: "I remember walking through Ventura's Chinatown, back and forth in front of Peirano's store. These Chinese people in their black pajama suits—they were very friendly. You didn't have to be afraid to go through there. The

buildings were these two story places with the tops coming out a little bit; you've seen those in Chinatowns. They had quite a colony there. As I say, very friendly, you didn't have to worry about them. And then down on the corner of the Avenue and Main Street there was a Mrs. Bock that had a little store down there. A general store with all these Chinese things. I'd go there with my father as a child, and she'd always give me some China nuts. One day she gave me two glass bracelets. I don't know if you remember those—green and white. And the first thing I did was drop one. I can remember crying for days about that. I still have some silk handkerchiefs she gave me. Her son worked at the hospital here for a long time, Benny Bock—I don't know if he's still there or not.

"It was a typical Chinatown. I was kind of sorry to see it torn down, because I think it would have been an interesting spot in Ventura."

Beatrice Rodriquez remembers that the Chinese had big vegetable gardens. She thinks the building lots must have been about one-half acre, with the garden to the front and the house behind it. She says, "I was scared of the Chinese." One day when she went with her Grandfather to get vegetables, one of the Chinese men said, "Give me that girl!" "They were just teasing me, but when you saw a Chinaman, you were scared. I didn't see Chinese ladies, or if I did I thought they were men because they wore pants too and shirts outside of their pants." She also recalls that everyone wore baggy pants; and some Chinese made sheets into clothing, with embroidery along the bottom. Also, they peddled clothes door-to-door.

From Alice Arnold Borgstrom: ". . . used to have a Chinese cook on the thrashing machine. In the cook house they would always have a Chinese cook. I know we used to think it was a great treat to go in and have a piece of pie. I guess they made very good pie. They're good cooks. . . . when they thrashed the grain they'd always have their cook house along and have their Chinese cook to have the meals ready for them."

Martha Furrer tells, "We had Chinese in the field. I remember we used to go out there to watch them eat. They'd wash that rice and wash and wash that rice until there was no white in it anymore. Then they'd sit out there and cook it. That's all they had . . . and a little fish. Us kids were nosy, you know, we'd go out there when they came home and see what they were cooking."

Annie R. Smith remembers Susie, a Chinese woman. The children couldn't understand why Susie wore pants and the men had long hair. The kids would catch turtles for Susie—for 50 cents each. Susie put the turtles in a bucket to clean them out like you would do with clams; then she'd cook them. Mrs. Smith also refers to the plank sidewalk in front of the two-room Chinese houses.

Mary Reardon's memories of Chinatown include a woman named Mary who wore low sandals; and Charlie, a vegetable vendor, who had a cart and horse and "those long bars for carrying seaweed." She goes on, "Then, of course, some of the old men were still living on Figueroa Street, between Main and Santa Clara where they had been for a long, long time. Of course, at five and ten years old, Chinamen are strange things, so if you had to walk down that Street, you walked on the other side. Of course, the poor old Chinamen weren't going to bother you at all."

From John Peirano's recollections: Sing Hing's and Big Tom's stores in Chinatown; and Big Tom's son, Bock, working at Foster's Hospital. Sing Hing's wife had bound feet. At funerals, the Chinese put a small roasted pig on top of the grave. When they could afford to, they dug up the graves, put the bones in galvanized and corrugated iron and wood crates, and shipped them to China. Sing Hee had a garden and raised very good lettuce.

Mattie Gleichmann and her husband bought the Pierpont Inn in 1928. They brought with them a chef they had had in Chowchilla. "The most loyal person that one could ever ask for. His wife did not come over from China, but he had two sons and he educated both those boys. I know one became a doctor.

"P. Y. Tong not only did all the regular cooking but he made the hot rolls. Those hot rolls became very, very famous. He would take the dough and roll it out in a strip. Then he would cut those strips and make figure-eights out of the little strips. The way he would twirl those around! I finally learned to do it, and I used to occasionally help him."

Elizabeth Thacher talks about the Thacher School, "The cooking and cleaning and laundry work was done by Chinese recruited from San Francisco's Chinatown, and for years we were looked after by the Gin family. Our head chef was with us for forty-five years, having come as a small boy of 15 and worked his way up, so he was a definite part of the school and important member of the staff."

In 1957, Basil McGann wrote this about the Thacher School. "The washing, of course, was done by Chinese. In the early days Chinese were hired because white servants in the Ojai Valley were scarce. But S. D. Thacher continued to have them by choice until, as Leroy McKim Makepeace points out in his *Sherman Thacher and His School*, they have become as much a part of the school as the mountains and the horses. But sometimes they were a puzzlement. Less than a month before the fall term of 1894, S. D. Thacher learned from Gin Hung, headman of the domestic staff, that Ock, a houseboy, had broken his leg and perhaps would be unable to return to the school. A few days later he had a second communication from San Francisco written by a professional Chinese letter writer:

> 'Dear S D Thacher I received your letter you want me and Hing to come back to Nordhoff ocother 1st ock cant come get you another boys now I wat for the ocother 1st how ock his leg he can come ock come ock not come I get you one good man can do wash and ion if you like yours truly Gin Hung.'

Punctuated, this letter made ample sense to the Headmaster as indeed does to this day the tradition of using only Chinese in the school's kitchen. For not only have they been faithful, competant (sic) and clean but also nearly 70 years have passed without a single case of theft by a Chinese servant. Quong, present head of the staff, has been at the school for 43 years."

W. W. Brown's journal entry of August 15, 1901: "Introducing Chinamen upon (railroad) sections as fast as possible now; this lets the Mexicans out: of the two evils a choice is hard."

Myrtle Shepherd Francis writing on Theodosia Burr Shepherd . . . "A seed cleaning machine was an unknown luxury; and cleaning fine seeds was one of Theo's problems which her Chinese servant, Wing, solved. After beating, crushing, or rubbing off the outer sheaths of the seeds, Wing would put a handful of them on a large tray; and then tipping, tilting, and blowing, the little Chinaman would clean quantities in an incredibly short time.

"It was one of Wing's duties to cut and bunch these grasses for drying, and one day he came grinning with the various kinds bunched together and tied over his shoulder, Theo was so amused and pleased she sent him to the photographer, that they might have a picture of him."

Wing, Theodosia Burr Shepherds' servant, 1884.

From the minutes of the Farmer's Canal and Water Company trustees' meeting on June 2, 1874: "The superintendent was authorized to effect a loan of $400 to settle with the Chinamen laboring on the ditch, the same to be paid out of the last assessment levied." And from the Company's ledger: "June 5, 1874—to Chinese labor—209 days at $1.50 = $313.50."

J. H. Morrison remembers, ". . . I was getting a shoeshine when an old Chinese came into the cigar stand. He made his purchase, looked up at me, stopped and said, "You Mollison boy, I work you' father, long time, you little boy then, me Ah Ho, you know me?" I certainly did not recognize him, and how on earth did he know me after 30 years? For many years our California Chinese were a big part of those cheerful yesterdays."

In Ralph Bennett's boyhood there were two or three Chinese laundrymen in Santa Paula on Saticoy Street. Also, every Thursday or Friday, "we had a man squawking a fish market with a little horse and ice."

Cerisa House Wesley says, "I don't remember any Chinese children going to the Hill School. All I remember are Mexicans, which called themselves Spanish. I don't remember any Orientals going, I mean any Filipinos or anything. I remember just one black, which was me. And Mexicans, Caucasians . . . everybody went to the Hill School because there was no other school.

"Used to be a Chinese cemetery (on Poli Street) . . . with the Chinese, Caucasians all buried there at the same time. And I'll tell you what I saw with my own eyes; the Chinese always believed when they buried anybody to carry food; to kill an animal and leave it on the grave. And I never will forget the time that they did kill a pig. And when they went up to the grave they left this pig for them to eat. I think it was their idea that they had to have something to eat. And that happened right here."

Arthur Donald Alvord shares many memories. "There were lots of Chinese in Ventura and they had a Chinatown down there. We kids used to go down there. We heard that they eat birds' nests, sort of a swallow. Well, we gathered up a lot of birds' nests and took them down there and tried to sell them to them!

"My aunt and uncle had two Chinamen—Big Sam and Little Sam—working for them and one of them was the only Chinaman I

knew who could drive a four or six horse team. He worked for Charlie Jones afterwards. The other one, I guess he worked for my uncle fifty or sixty years. He started out as a young boy over here. My uncle took him everyplace he went. Took him down to Hollywood. He had an old tent made out of carpet—dark as all-get-out—and he used to like to go and smoke a little opium once in awhile. He got in trouble with it. Then one time he went to get on the train—I guess there was an immigration officer. This was up in Santa Barbara. He called him, 'Oh, Cholly, Cholly!' He said, 'My name no Cholly! I come this country before you born!'

"One time my brother came home. He was a grown man then and this old fellow hadn't seen him for a long, long time. My aunt said to him, 'Do you know who this is?' 'Oh, I don't know, I don't know—I think it Miz Alvord boy, Number 3.' Which it was. It was 'Number 3!'

"He wanted to go back to China. It's their religion to want to be buried in China. My aunt felt awfully bad about it. My aunt used to ask what they called a 'Boss Chinaman' in Santa Barbara—he did all the business for all the Chinamen around here—how Sam was. 'Oh, him do pretty good, pretty good. Catchum wife now!' The old man was 80 or 90 years old—nobody knew how old he was—all shrivelled up, half-blind. My aunt said, 'Why, he can't afford a wife.' 'Oh, he catchum cheap one! He get one eye no good.'

"A Chinaman committed murder in Santa Barbara and the officers were looking for him and this old Chinaman . . . knew this Chinaman who worked for my aunt and uncle. They took bales out of the big stack of baled hay and made a room in there and hid him in there for three or four days. Every night this Chinaman would cook a meal and take it down to this (fugitive) Chinaman and push the bales back in, so they couldn't tell there was anybody there. They're as 'coyote' as all-get-out!

"One time, my uncle was gone and a fellow came there and this Chinaman saw that he had a sack of grain and a bale of hay on the back of his buggy. This Chinaman said, 'Where you catchum that hay, that grain?' 'Oh, your bossman gave it to me.' 'What my bossman name?' Well, he couldn't tell him, so he said, 'You takeum back, you no can have!'

"Our folks hired a lot of Chinese. Sometimes we had a Chinese cook. Anytime we had company or anything, my mother would say, 'We're going to have company.' 'Oh, that's alright, alright—just few more potato.' It was okay with him because he always had plenty.

"We used to go to the Chinese community in Ventura whenever they had firecrackers and stuff on their holidays. We kids . . . would go to the graveyard. The Chinese, when they died, they always put a pig on the grave for them to have something to eat while they were going to heaven. And they'd throw little pieces of paper with holes all through them and the devil was supposed to

A laborer at the Dudley ranch in Ventura.

have to go through every one of those holes before he could get to this Chinese grave and by that time the spirit would be gone to heaven and the devil was out of luck. And they used to put candles on them, and we kids used to go up and steal the candles off and burn them for light in our tent. They were soft candles—they burned up pretty fast. I guess they were Chinese-made—a lot of them had Chinese figures on them. They had a graveyard of their own on the west side of the graveyard up there (on Poli Street) and then they had one over east of Hueneme. When Oxnard first

started, there were a lot of Chinese over around Oxnard. They had them for heading beets and hoeing beets."

Before 1900, Richard B. Haydock had an encounter with a Chinese farmer. "In this same oil field near the river lived one Chinaman who cultivated a few acres of land. Occasionally he would drive to town in a small rickety wagon with some of his produce. Usually he walked to town about once a week. One day on his way home I noticed him stop once or twice and look back across the road. Then as he started on I observed a couple of boys rise up from behind some weeds and throw clods at him. I was standing behind some young cypress trees and the boys had not seen me. As they ducked behind the weeds, I picked up some clods and began pelting them. The Chinaman noticed this and walked on. When the boys discovered me, they demanded indignantly to know why I had pelted them; they hadn't been throwing at me. The point to this story lies in the sequel. Often as this Chinaman came to town he stopped at our house and left some Chinese candy, lichee nuts, etc. At Christmas time and Chinese New Year he always brought something as long as we lived there."

F. L. Fairbanks remembers that "There were always quite a number of Chinese men in and around Hueneme. There was always at least one as cook on a threshing machine. The Bard family always had three, usually of the Soo Hoo family. D. T. Perkins always had one, and so did Major Gregg and Tom Rice. Probably many other families did. Tom Yee, who worked for the Rice family, always wore a bone casing over his little finger and let his nail grow out until it might be almost two inches long. It seems that this was an old custom in China, and was to indicate that you didn't have to work. Some of these men had accounts with us, but ordinarily they carried it in cash. Wong Ah Gow was a farmer, and we sometimes loaned him $2000 or $3000 on a crop mortgage. We never lost any money on any of them."

A spring, 1884 entry from Anna Seward's diary: "The human element is supplied by a gang of Chinese under their own overseer. They have tents where they eat and sleep. Sunday afternoon someone proposed that we go down to the field to see the Chinese at their Sunday dinner. Curiosity took us. We were not thinking of them as fellow mortals, but as a new and interesting species. We sat down near the cook tent. When the food was ready, the overseer with courtly grace offered each of us a bowl of fragrant steaming

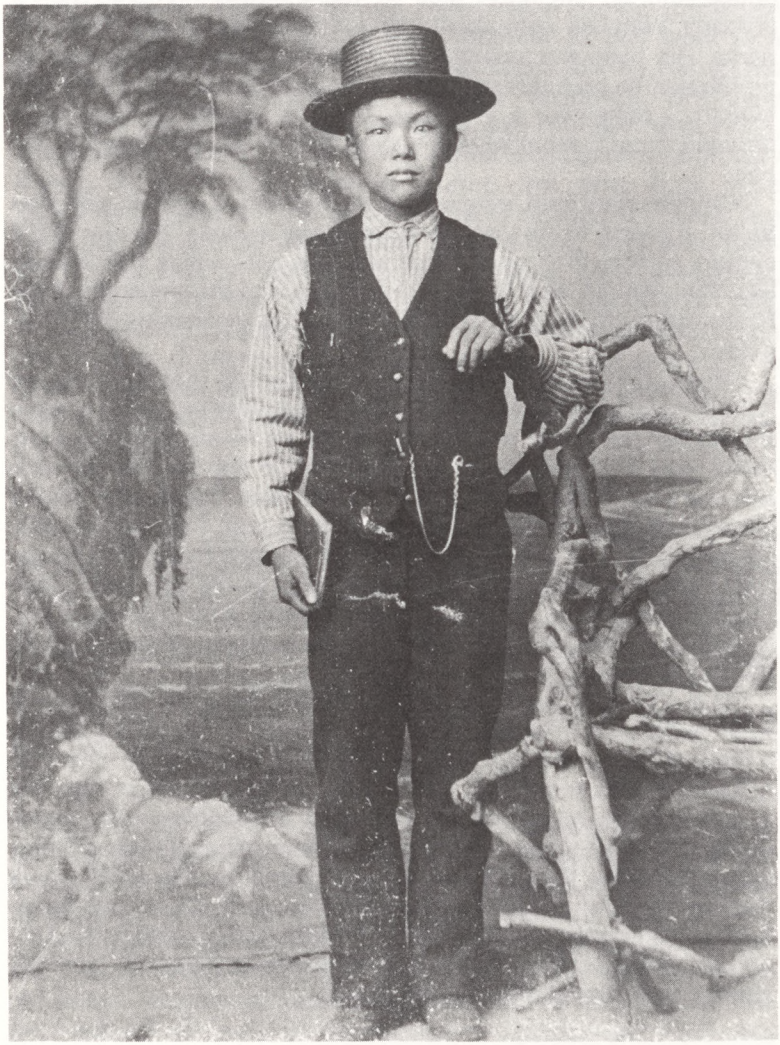
rice and chicken with a pair of clean chopsticks. Not till then did we realize our own impoliteness. We contrasted so unfavorably with this 'Heathen Chinee'. What if the situation had been reversed and they were sitting under our windows to see the animals eat?"

Wong Ah Gow of Hueneme.

There were Chinese in the Ojai Valley around the turn of the century. Howard Clark Bald tells of some of them. "Many Chinese as well as Italians were employed in wood cutting operations in the valley around the first of the century. Some Chinese lingered on as domestics or in other capacities for a decade or so. My grandmother had one who baked delicious bread. The loaves were

always a beautiful deep brown. But this Chinese and my grandmother suddenly parted company when it was discovered that he would fill his mouth with water and squirt it over the loaves during the baking.

"There was always a Chinese vegetable wagon pulled by one or two horses that came around once a week. There were never fresh vegetables in the grocery store that I remember. A carrot or turnip



Little Jim, who worked for the Robinson family in the Upper Ojai around 1880.

to each of us youngsters was always a treat, but the Chinese vendor did not always have them. No one can tell now where the vegetables were grown, probably near Ventura. A special treat that we youngsters looked forward to about Christmas time from the Chinese was lichee nuts; they were delicious.

"And there was a Chinese laundry at one time that was operated by Wah Lee. It was located east on Ojai Avenue, just west of the bridge and on the north side of the highway on Mrs. Gally's property. Wah Lee went about with a covered wagon drawn by one horse. His business survived on into the second decade. During prohibition he probably made more money bootlegging than doing laundry. I remember a little stir that was caused by Mrs. Gally refusing to put him out when the local officers were unable to catch him.

"Chinese were said to have built the first stone walls in east Ojai Valley. It seems to me that the walls looked as old at the turn of the century as they look now. Those walls do not include the ones on east Ojai Avenue, east Grand, north Carne, and the one on the Twin Peaks ranch. I have been told that these Chinese received 50 cents a day.

"There was not too much law enforcement in that day, and the poor Chinese sometimes had a pretty rough time of it. I have heard my mother tell of her brother roping one as he plodded along the dusty road. Tom was riding a colt and could not manage the rope and the colt at the same time; the result was that the Chinaman climbed up the rope and took it away from him. Tom dismounted, Katie held the colt and Tom tussled with the Chinese to retrieve the rope. Later the fellow returned with a shotgun, but Tom had ridden off to the Upper Ojai. Katie's mother hid her in a clothes closet and locked all of the doors. After circling the house a couple of times, the Chinese departed.

"The (Chinese) laundryman was driving west on Main Street when some boys lifted a basket of laundry out of the wagon and set it down on the street; but someone drew his attention to what had happened. Well, that fellow had the last laugh. Some time later the boys who had taken his laundry were swimming in the creek beyond Clausen's Dairy. He slipped up and stole all their clothes. Needless to say, they were not returned nicely laundered. One dark night a group of rowdies surrounded the wash house and began firing guns into the air. The occupant of the house opened the door and returned the fire. In the rowdies' haste to clear out one was almost decapitated on a clothes line."

Oxnard's Chinatown was called China Alley. Located between what is now Oxnard Boulevard and A Street, and Sixth and Eighth Streets, it was an active Chinese community from before the turn of the century until the late 1940s. At its peak it was home to around 600 people.

Hall Soo Hoo remembers it well. He arrived in Oxnard from China in 1917 at age fourteen and was fortunate to find work in a restaurant, and a home with relatives. Eventually he owned the Golden Chicken restaurant on Oxnard Boulevard. His early memories are of wood frame buildings, two Chinese restaurants, one Chinese saloon, a barber shop, a pool room, and some grocery stores. Most of the residents during the early days were agricultural workers. Mr. Soo Hoo's wife, Nora, arrived in 1933. She feels that the stories about crime and the tong wars were overplayed. The men of the community, she says, were just typical, rowdy bachelors. She thinks the last tong war was over by 1926. The Bing Kong Tong served as a Chinese Benevolent Association in the 1920s. It organized the fire department, acted as a court in community disputes, and arranged funerals. The Bing Kong Tong was still functioning in 1977—it's modern name was the Chinese Free Masons.

Olen Adams tells of "those Chinamen sitting out with their pigtails hanging down their backs and their fingernails wrapped around their wrists, those guys in their kimonos. And us kids would go down there and get lichee nuts and Chinese candy. They never bothered us. They kind of wanted to get rid of us. Everybody had a Chinese cook, and the big ranchos all had Chinese cooks, and they were laborers too. They did a lot of work. I suppose they came in with the railroad."

And from Coletha Lehman: "Another place people stayed away from was China Alley. My first impression, or first experience with China Alley, was when I was about five years old. We had a police chief whose name was Kelly. He rode in a horse and buggy. For two or three years he would come down, put me in the buggy, and take me down to China Alley before the Fourth of July where he could get all the fireworks he wanted. He would load up the buggy with all the fireworks, and we would come back to my home and there I had all the fireworks in the country! Then he would take me down at other times too. They would load me up with lichee nuts, coconut candy, and so I always thought it was a great place to be. But then I

found out it was very different. Years later I found out about the lottery places going on there, and many, many of the businessmen in Oxnard paid nightly visits to mark their lottery tickets, also have chances with very young girls.

"I had an older brother who thought I should know all the things that went on. He took me down to show me those gambling places. The Chinese had a very unique little system of communication. They would sit outside their little stores, three of them on every block on a box, and as you approached Fifth Street, the first Chinaman, if he knew you, would give the OK if it was alright. But if they didn't know you, why, then they began to make preparations. They had little false fronts on their stores. As you walked down it looked like there was a nice little place to have some tea or buy a teapot or Chinese teacups, but they were all full of dust so you guessed there wasn't much business there. So the night that my brother took me down we went into this place that looked like a little tea shop, but up in one corner as I looked up, there was a little square hole and there was an eye looking right at me. But if they knew you, then there was a sliding door that opened, and you went into a hallway; you walked a little ways in this hallway, and then there was another one of these eyes, and then another door opened until you got into where the lottery tables were. Then beyond that, where the big gambling was, there was all kinds of gambling going on. Then you went down some steps to what was called the opium den, and there you saw all these derelicts with their opium pipes. They didn't care, they didn't know they were being observed at all. The ones that I saw were Orientals. In Oxnard there was a place to deal in opium; they say they did a big business between San Diego and San Francisco. They did have these opium dens and I have seen them.

"Some of the places had two stories, some of them lived upstairs. I remember we used to go to a place that was called 'The Duck Pond' for Chinese food. We went in on China Alley, not Oxnard Boulevard. There was a little pond out there, and I suppose it did have ducks in it, maybe. We went up these steps to an upstairs place. There they had all the smoke hanging around, and we had our Chinese food. It was good."

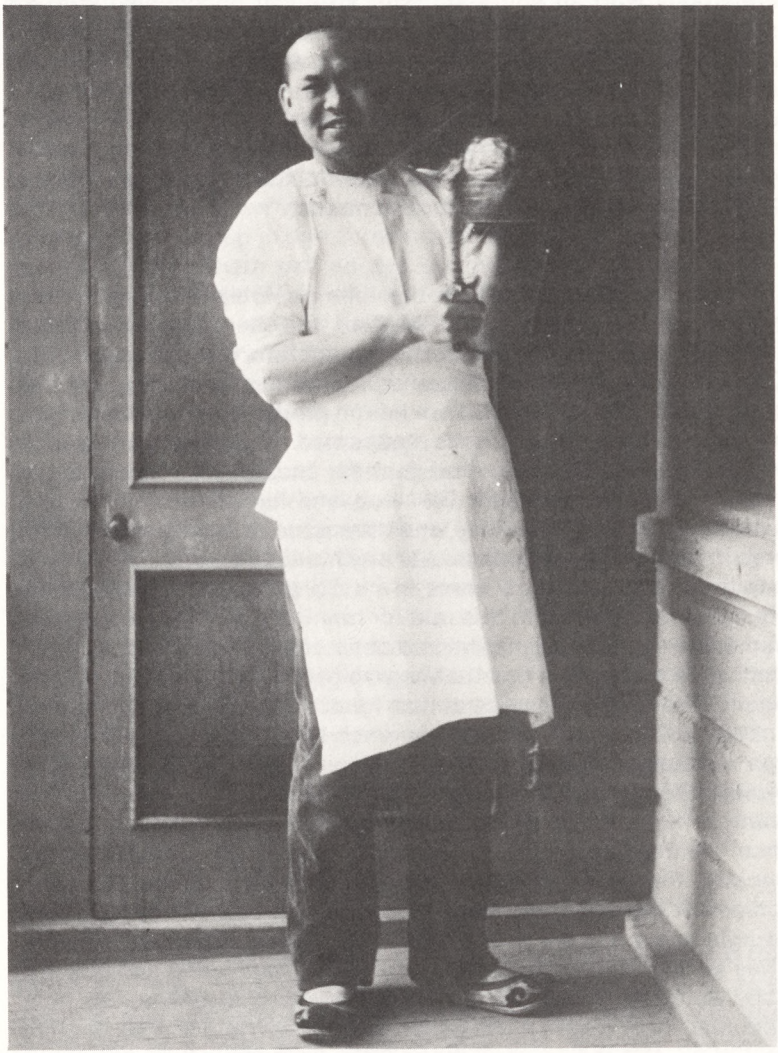
And from Verna Bloom, first, a quote from the *Oxnard Courier* for March 23, 1906, "One of the most frightful and atrocious crimes that has ever shocked the people of this or any other town was committed at a little after three o'clock last Saturday morning, when night watchman Andrew Murray McNaughton was foully shot

to death by a murderous and dastardly assassin in an alley back of one of the cribs in the red light district." Then she continues, "The crime caused a crusade against vice by city and county officials, and they were busy all day Saturday raiding opium joints in the Chinese quarter. The paper says several handsome layouts were confiscated and taken to the City Hall. Marshall William Reno ordered every crib in the tenderloin district closed and gave the inmates twenty-four hours to leave town. The paper blasted conditions with an editorial, 'With so much unoccupied land all about us, there is absolutely no necessity for from 1,000 to 1,500 Japanese and Chinese cuddling themselves up in a half-dozen measly, low, stinking and dirty huts with all kinds of pitfalls and dark alleys where murders can be committed in broad daylight without detection.' Although there was no evidence to connect any Orientals with the crime, they received the first blame. Several Mexicans were finally tried for the murder."

United States Secretary of the Interior William P. Clark talks about his father, Robert Clark, "My Dad was sheriff from '22 to '33, I think. Anyway, it was 11 years. During that time things flourished in China Alley as far as gambling and prostitution. Of course, in those days, unfortunately, things were let run pretty wide-open in Oxnard as far as those crimes were concerned. There's one occasion where Dad decided things had gone far enough, so he went to his friend, Los Angeles Sheriff Biscaluz, and had him send in some help. They raided China Alley, and they actually fenced off a certain area in China Alley and made over one hundred arrests. I remember one case where a fellow came in—a Chinese—into Dad's office. He had been arrested in this raid for running a gambling house. He came in and told Dad that he had been arrested again, and he felt that when he paid his fine that he was getting a license to open up again. That's about the size of it as far as China Alley is concerned.

"When we were on the Sturgis ranch they had a Chinese cook. I can remember he had a pigtail, which was a real oddity to the kids around the ranch. He was one of the kindest fellows you'd ever want to meet. There were a number of them and I can remember them on the Oxnard Plain. Everyone tried to get Chinese cooks because they were so dependable and were good cooks, too. I can remember them in those days. They wore a queue. At one time Mrs. Sturgis had a number of them up there cutting wood on the ranch. They all wore these big coolie hats—straw hats—and had queues. They would carry their water to their camps on a stick across their shoulder. They'd have a five gallon can on each end of a six or eight foot stick, and they'd carry that across their shoulders.

"Nobody seemed to like the Chinese unless they wanted the help. Dad had a fondness for them because when he was a boy growing up, there was just one Chinese in Ojai—he ran a laundry—and he said that he and his brothers were always playing tricks on him. But the old Chinese fellow always had something for them to eat. He really made good friends with him and, as a result, Dad always thought he liked everybody but especially the Chinese people."



Soo Hoo How Fook ringing the dinner gong at Thomas R. Bard's Berylwood.

PRESENT-DAY FAMILIES

One of the most well-established, well-thought-of families in the county today is that of William Soo Hoo. Mr. Soo Hoo's parents came to Ventura County in 1920 from Guadalupe, California, where they had been farmers and merchants. Their first business in Oxnard was a general store in China Alley. Then, in 1927, they took over The Duck Pond restaurant and re-named it The Oriental Inn. That building was torn down in 1948; and, in 1949, they opened Mama Soo Hoo's Orient restaurant. Mr. Soo Hoo has the distinction of being probably the first male Chinese child born in Oxnard; and definitely the first Asian to serve on the Grand Jury. This honor was accorded him in 1956.

One of Mr. Soo Hoo's more entertaining anecdotes concerns Erle Stanley Gardner, a prominent local attorney who became famous as the author of the "Perry Mason" series of detective stories. Mr. Gardner represented the Chinese in gambling cases, and he would use the 'they all look alike' ruse to confuse the issue and win acquittal for his clients. Mr. Soo Hoo tells of the Chinese depositing money directly to Mr. Gardner's account—in payment for services rendered, of course; but also when the word went out that Mr. Gardner was running low.

Mr. Soo Hoo took the occasion of his oral history interview to correct the mistaken notion that Chinese are buried in the old "Oriental" cemetery on Pleasant Valley Road. He says that the Chinese have always used either the old Ventura cemetery (now a city park) on Poli Street or Ivy Lawn Memorial Park.

Another of the most highly regarded families in the county today is the Jue clan. The patriarch, Walton Quong Jue, came to America in 1922 from Nam Hing Lay, China. His port of entry was San Francisco. In 1928, he arrived in Ventura from Fresno. He and his cousin, Warner, established their store, The National Grocery, approximately where the Ventura County Historical Museum is now located. This put them practically next door to the Peirano's grocery store; but the competition did not sour the personal relationship of the individuals involved. The *Ventura Star-Free Press* quoted Nick Peirano in 1981, "Really, though, there was no competitive spirit. We always got along beautifully. I'd go down and buy stuff from him when we ran out, and if he ran out of something, he'd come to us. We took care of each other. Mr. Jue was a very fine neighbor. He was always polite and very decent. And he ran a nice, clean store."

Walton Jue returned to China in 1930. He built for his father (a prosperous grocer himself) a four story brick house; and for the village, a new school. In 1933, he returned to the United States with Mary, his first wife. She died in 1960. Their children and grandchildren are involved in education and retailing. With his second wife, Betty, Mr. Jue still takes an active role in the management of the family's varied business interests.

The 480 members of the Southern California Jue family met to honor their founder for his 80th birthday, in 1980. His children presented him with a 40-day tour of China, a land he hadn't seen in almost 50 years. On his return to Ventura, Walton Jue said of China, "It has changed quite a bit. The people are a lot better off than before. Everybody can go to school and have enough to eat now. They modernized and planted shade trees all over China. But there is no place like America. China was beautiful, but just to visit."

In terms of the individuals we have been concerned with in this article, the Jue and Soo Hoo families are relative latecomers to Ventura County. Unfortunately, we have no records indicating that any of the residents of the original Ventura Chinatown or their descendants are still living in Ventura County. Most of those Chinese apparently did not want to become Americans; and our government certainly did not encourage them toward citizenship. But it does seem very strange to think that all we have left of those people who helped build our community are some casual mentions in the history books, a few faded photographs—and some fragile, fading memories.

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QUARTERLY

VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, NUMBER FOUR SUMMER, 1984

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Photographs from the Ventura County Historical Museum and Conejo Library collections.

The cover illustration is a portrait of J.F. and Juanita M. Roth, and their children: Caroline Mary, Frederick Joseph, Bertha Helen, Matilda N., and Elvira Louise. This photo was taken in 1886.

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME TWENTY-NINE, NUMBER FOUR SUMMER, 1984

Joseph and Arcadia Camarillo Wolfson

THE EARLY JEWISH FAMILIES OF VENTURA COUNTY

By Rose L. Silverstein

To understand the early Jewish settlers of Ventura County, it is necessary to know something about the history of the Jewish people in Europe. It is important to understand why they became merchants rather than farmers and land-owners. There was a reason for so many of the stores along Main Street, and the Bank of A. Levy, being owned by Jews.

In 1556, Pope Paul IV established the first compulsory ghetto in Rome on the left bank of the Tiber. The Roman ghetto was enclosed by a high wall and had a gate which was locked from sundown to sunrise, as well as on Sundays and Christian holidays. The Jews were not allowed to live anywhere else in the city.

Other communities created ghettos and additional repressive rules. In most places the Jews paid a heavier tax than did the gentiles. If they were allowed to trade outside the ghetto walls at all, this trade was usually severely restricted. For instance, they might be permitted to sell used clothing, but not new garments. This gave the Jewish merchants a shabby, transient character and turned many of them into second-hand and junk dealers. The rules varied from area to area, but one edict seemed universal—the Jews could not be land-owners.

In the 18th Century, with the growing enlightenment throughout England and France, the ghetto walls began to crumble. This literal opening of the gates had a double result. It brought thousands of Jews, especially in France, into contact with the outside world and gave them a chance to enter trades and professions. French Jews became Frenchmen first and Jews only in respect to their religion. Later this happened in Germany as well. The German Jews considered themselves to be Germans "of Hebraic or Mosaic persuasion."

The transition then to American citizens first and Jews second was most natural. The earliest records of Jews in the Colonies were: New Amsterdam in 1654; Pennsylvania in 1655; and Newport, Rhode Island in 1658. As the country grew and the frontiers were pushed back, the Jewish peddlers followed—but in many a peddler's pack was also a craft, a trade, a profession. As the villages and towns emerged the pack turned into a store; and the butcher, baker, tailor, cobbler, candlestick maker and even the banker settled in and flourished in the new communities.

Thompson's & West's *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura County,* published in 1883, notes that Henry Cohn arrived in the town of San Buenaventura in 1866, the year of its incorporation. Cohn, though to be the first Jew to live in Ventura County, settled in Saticoy.

The first issue of the first local newspaper, in the spring of 1871, mentions the new general merchandise store of Henry Cohen (sic). The Ventura *Signal* on August 20, 1874, reported that his remains were "taken up on the 'Senator' (a steamship) for burial in the Jewish cemetary" in San Francisco. His store was listed under his wife's name in the late 1870's and 1880's.

In 1869, Frenchman Leon Cerf arrived in Ventura by way of Mexico. He had been part of the ill-fated Maximillian's reign in Mexico. With the fall of that regime, he found his way up the coast, arriving in Ventura County on December 7, 1869. By the beginning of 1872 he was operating his general merchandise store at Wynema (later spelled Hueneme). In 1875, in addition to his store (which later became a liquor store and saloon), he began raising sheep. By the mid-1870s Leon Cerf & Company was one of the largest taxpayers in Ventura County.

The Leon Cerf family

Achille Levy and Moise L. Wolff (Alsatian Jews and distant relatives who had found their way to Hueneme from San Francisco) were operating their general merchandise store on Market Street in 1875, the year Levy became Hueneme's Postmaster. In 1881, Achille Levy sold his part of that business to Leon Lehmann. He became an agricultural broker; buying grain, hay, nuts, fruit, honey, and shipping them

Mrs. Achille Levy

to urban markets. In 1890, Levy rented a railroad car to haul lima beans east. "Beans courtesy of A. Levy, Hueneme, California" was painted on the side of the car. His banking activities grew out of this brokerage business. As was common in those days, Levy carried the debts of the local farmers on his books. In good times they would leave their cash on deposit with him and write drafts on their accounts.

Following a trip to France, Levy returned to Hueneme with his bride, Lucy Levy, a distant cousin. Her first glimpse of Ventura County may not have been a pleasant one. When the couple reached the top of the Conejo Grade, they discovered that the road was too muddy and slippery for the horses to safely guide the stagecoach down. In her new calfskin boots, the young bride trod down the Grade on foot.

The Lehmann brothers, Leon, Paul and Edmond, came to Hueneme in the 1880s. Their firm, first called Wolff & Lehmann, then Lehmann & Waterman, and finally Lehmann Brothers, became one of the largest retail and produce commission businesses in the County. Leon Lehmann was influential in creating the Oxnard Harbor District, and in the late 1930s, the new port at Hueneme.

Another very successful early County family were the Cohns. Morris Cohn arrived in 1871. He was joined by his brothers, Simon in 1873, and later, David. They settled in an area south of the town of Ventura known as the San Pedro Precinct, which shortly afterward became the Town of New Jerusalem. That town is now called El Rio. Simon struck out for himself in 1875. His store was on the corner of Ventura Boulevard and Vineyard Avenue. Another brother, Leopold, and a brother-in-law, Kujawski, had stores on two of the other corners of that intersection. Of the entire family, Simon seems to have had the greatest impact on the community. He was famous for carrying the debts of the farmers of the Santa Clara Valley during lean times. His reputation was impeccable. Once he sold a saddle to a customer, but forgot the man's name. He sent out bills to the thirty most likely purchasers, figuring the real purchaser would pay. His problem was not resolved when twenty-nine of the thirty customers paid. Although he was deeply involved in the religious activities of the Jewish community, he also built a Catholic church in El Rio. Later that church was moved to the Colonia area. Simon Cohn invested wisely in land in El Rio. He built a sports arena on the property across the street from his store. Today that property is the site of the Financial Plaza Tower.

In the early 1870s, Morris Einstein, E. Einstein, and Abraham Bernheim established a large general merchandise store. Morris and Abraham were born in Konigsberg, Germany. Abraham arrived in Ventura in 1873 from Santa Cruz. Morris is reported to have been "of San Francisco". Their partnership, formed in 1875, lasted until 1895. Morris'

San Francisco connections assured a good stock of merchandise, as San Francisco was the supply point for most of Ventura's retail outlets. The store was sold in the early 1880s to the partnership of Roos and Hartzfeldt. They developed a soft goods department store and named it in honor of the largest ship of the day, The Great Eastern. That store, under a variety of owners, existed into the 1980s, on Oak Street in downtown Ventura.

Other pioneer Jewish residents of the County were: Austrian born Joseph Roth who operated a shoe store in Ventura; French born Issac Roth (no relation to Joseph) - a saloon-keeper; Simon Meyerstein (a member of the San Bernardino Meyerstein family) and J.A. Kallman each owned clothing stores; Abraham Silver was a tailor. Henry Guggenheim was affiliated with Einstein & Bernheim. Theodore M. Breslauer, later of Santa Barbara, ran a dry goods and clothing store in the late 1870s. Max Enderlein, a University graduate from Berlin, was elected teacher of music in Ventura's public schools in 1874. He also had a school of languages on Main Street in 1873. He was married to famed horticulturist Theodosia Burr Shepherd's sister, Ella Lee. Sadly, he died of heat prostration on August 9, 1882 while hunting with his nephew, Gussie.

Emmanuel Franz came to Ventura in 1869 and established a variety store. His house is still standing on Oak Street, between Main and Poli. Samuel Epstein and Isidor Feder owned tailor shops in Ventura. By 1872, Joseph Wolfson was offering the highest prices for farm produce, wool and hides; and the Boukofsky Brothers were advertising their general merchandise firm. Emanuel Hirschfelder, who had been a gold rush pioneer at Downiesville, California and who became a naturalized American citizen in Sierra County, established a shoe store in Ventura in October 1877. His son, Edward, eventually took over as manager. Solomon Cohn operated a store in Santa Paula in 1882; and in the 1890s Simon Wineman founded the Chicago Clothing Company in Ventura.

Also residing in the County in the 1890s and at the turn of the century were: P. Liberman, a general merchant of Oxnard; L. Cohn, a saloon-keeper in Oxnard; Solomon L. Mack of Hueneme; H. Lippman, a dry goods dealer in Oxnard; and E. Marks, a clothing merchant, of Ventura.

One of the first Jewish physicians in southern California was Joshua F. Marks, M.D. of Ventura. He attended the circumcision of David Cohn's son on February 26, 1895, in New Jerusalem. Others attending included Leon Cerf, Abraham Bernheim, Emanuel Hirschfelder, Joseph Roth, Issac Roth, Jacques Roos, Moise L. Wolff, Achille

Max Enderlein

Levy, Solomon L. Mack, H.M. Schiller, N. Kuyawsky, Samuel Herbst, Solomon Cohn and Simon Cohn. Rabbi Abraham Blum came up from Los Angeles to bring young Cohn into the Covenant and Ventura County provided more than the ten Jewish men required for such a religiously auspicious occasion.

In the autumn of 1872, Ventura County's first recorded High Holy Day services were held. The published announcement read, "The Day of Atonement was duly observed by our Jewish citizens Friday and

Simon Cohn

Saturday, their stores being closed and services held at a private home throughout the day." While the Jewish community in Ventura County had no distinctive Jewish neighborhoods or centers of Jewish culture, they did endeavor to retain their ancient traditions as best they could. Anne Levy, Achille's daughter, recalled that although there was no formal Jewish education available, the Episcopal minister would tell her father when the Sunday School would be studying portions of the Old Testament, and then she would attend. Her niece, Adele Weill, was more fortunate. She received lessons mailed from

Congregation Emanu-El of San Francisco to Ben Nordman in Oxnard, and then passed on to Hortense Lehmann, and finally to Adele. Although there were High Holy Day services as early as 1872, Jewish group action in buying cemetary plots in 1895, and, finally, a Jewish Sunday School established by Mrs. Simon Windeman in the 1890s, there was no formally organized Jewish community until October, 1938, when the Ventura County Jewish Council was founded. Eventually the house of worship was established at Temple Beth Torah.

The Jews of Ventura County have from the earliest days been well-integrated into the community. They have joined the Masons, Elks, Odd Fellows, and the Moose; and have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into local activities. The Queen of the September, 1900, Ventura Street Fair was Bertha Roth. Streets have been named for the pioneer Jews—in Hueneme, Lehmann Road is named for Leon Lehmann; in Oxnard, Wolff Street honors Moise L. Wolff; in El Rio, Simon Street is named for Simon Cohn and Minna Street commemorates his wife.

America is the Land of Opportunity for many diverse peoples. The Jews of America, and of Ventura County, believe in the promise of freedom, opportunity and security. Their re-payment to America for its welcoming acceptance has been diligence, perseverance, and loyalty. The ghetto walls are truly down. The Jews of America are truly Americans.

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by Myrtle Shepherd Francis

Author's note: Any information about the descendents of these pioneers would be most welcomed, and may be forwarded to me in care of the Docent Council, Ventura County Historical Museum.

IN SEARCH OF:
A VENTURA OIL COMPANY

by Evelyn Scott

Ventura County has a good climate, useful vegetation, plentiful game—and oil. Lots of oil. So much oil that it seeped to the surface and the Chumash Indians used it to waterproof their baskets and boats. So much oil that Ventura County was identified as "the logical cradle of the oil industry on the Pacific Coast."[1] So much oil that even nearly one hundred and twenty years after the first local well was drilled ("Ojai #1" in 1865, drilled under the direction of Thomas Bard was unproductive; in 1867, Ojai #6 was the State's first recorded gusher.) Ventura wells are still producing.

But was there ever a company actually known as *The Ventura Oil Company?*

I thought so. When my parents and I came to Hollywood in 1916, my father went to work for what I believed was called The Ventura Oil Company.

Even as a little girl I knew what oil was. The prehistoric monsters we saw at Exposition Park had gotten stuck in it. The derricks at the edge of citrus groves were pumping it. The Overland automobile my father bought burned it in the form of gasoline. I definitely had some notions about oil; but "Ventura" didn't mean a thing to me.

The name I *did* know was van Deinse. Francis Christian van Deinse was (I oversimplified) a man my father worked for. And I thought it marvelous that his daughter (my age) had been christened Francina Christina. I don't remember ever visiting The Ventura Oil Company office, but we often called on the van Deinses in Pasadena. Francina had a copy of the fairy tales book *East of the Sun and West of the Moon,* illustrated by Kay Nielsen; and a box of beautiful pastels with which she drew elegant princesses and horses. These possessions and skills impressed me somewhat more than watching the Rose Parade from her front lawn!

Over the years I have casually wondered why my father, who had been a partner in a Boston book business, had joined the Ventura Oil Company. And when my husband and I moved to Ventura in the spring of 1979 I decided to search for that company's origins, and my father's connection with it.

Of course there is no problem finding out about oil in general in Ventura County. This county is full of the essence and artifacts of oil. . . the special washing machines for oil workers' clothes at the Ventura Avenue laundromats, the offshore oil rigs, the oil *still* seeping to the surface along Highway 150 east of Ojai. But—a "Ventura Oil Company"?

"There never was any such thing," said Lloyd McCampbell, who had worked in Fillmore in 1922 at the refinery; the *Ventura refinery,* which, in fact, was more often called the Fillmore refinery. This facility was built by the Montebello Oil Company; and, as F.C. van Deinse was a Director of the Montebello Oil Company,[2] I thought that the Ventura refinery of the Montebello Oil Company was my dimly remembered Ventura Oil Company. My father must have worked for Montebello.

But, as I was preparing to give up the search, oil man T.W. Brown

These heavy, metal signs were unearthed at a construction site in Santa

called the Ventura County Historical Society to ask the background of some signs just, literally, unearthed in construction work at Santa Fe Springs.[3] These signs were lettered "Ventura Gasoline", "California's Best", "Ventura Motor Oil", and "Ventura Refining Co.". They were heavy metal, enamelled red, yellow, white and blue; and one was in the shape of a mission bell.

So, what I remembered imperfectly must in fact have been the Ventura Refining Company. Now I wondered how I was going to fill in the details on that.

Edith Jarrett of Fillmore advised me to talk with James F. Shiells, for "the Shiells Lease" was the first development by Montebello Oil. This proved to be very good advice: She said Mr. Shiells would "know it all", and he did.

Driving out East Guiberson Road in Fillmore is a trip back to the orange-forest days of 1916; nothing to see except the shining,

Fe Springs, California. They are enamelled in red, yellow, blue, and white.

heavy rows of trees and the distant outline of the hills across the Santa Clara Valley, with just a glimpse of far buildings and still more-remote derricks.

And yes, James Shiells *did* know it all.

I told him I was principally interested in finding out if there had been a Ventura Oil Company. The answer, he said, was both Yes and No. There had been *Ventura Consolidated Oil Fields,* a holding company for the refinery and the Montebello leases.

Mr. Shiells used a 1928 oil field map to illustrate the Shiells Lease. He explained how his father, uncle and grandmother had come to this area from Scotland over one hundred years ago. They settled first in Santa Barbara, but then homesteaded in the Santa Clara Valley where they raised cattle. The original small house they built in Shiells Canyon still stands. In the early 1890s, James Shiells' father married a lass from the north of England whom he met in the United States. About the time James Shiells was born, the family began to switch from raising cattle to growing oranges.

When James was about ten years old, the first oil test-well was drilled one canyon over from his parent's homestead. It was dry. Then the Montebello Company (which had drilled dusters in Montebello, California, but kept the name anyway) took a lease on Shiells Canyon. Those wells were not dry and that field is still in production.

Mr. Shiells and his wife, the former Ida van Deinse, were often visited by F.C. van Deinse. When Mr. van Deinse or other Directors of the Company visited the Lease they stayed in the comfortable Company guest house. Most of the Directors were from the East; many from Boston. It must have been the Boston connection that brought my father to the Company. His book business, which depended largely on importing, had suffered set-backs during World War I.

The guest house was only one of many buildings in Shiells Canyon. There were living quarters, a grocery store, and even a school. The Lease had a population of about one hundred people—men, women, and children. A congenial group of good people, Mr. Shiells said. Not the rollicking roisterers common to oilfield movies.

Mr. Shiells took me on a tour of Shiells Canyon. We saw the old Shiells home at the bottom, and a Texaco processing plant higher up. Ventura Consolidated Oil Fields sold out in 1928 to California

Petroleum, which within a year sold to the Texas Company, now Texaco. The refinery, very up-to-date when it was built, and modernized in the Thirties, was closed in 1950. But up in Shiells Canyon new wells are still being drilled.

Oil fields and orange groves have co-existed since the beginning of petroleum development in the County. I wondered if the close relationship was congenial. Yes, according to Mr. Shiells. The oil companies might take an acre or two of the grove, but the grower always was compensated; and if he had mineral rights, as homesteaders did, he could benefit handsomely. Perhaps the best example of this compatibility occurred in a very bad frost year when, Mr. Shiells recalled, Texaco gave orders that no rancher who applied for "smudge" oil should be turned away: There would be no hassle over credit.

Our tour continued with the old Lease schoolhouse. Like his present-day home, it is perched on a slope over-looking the Valley. Today it is used by the Shiells Ranch for storage.

Mr. Shiells had one more surprise for me. The Ventura Refining Company, as a division of Ventura Consolidated Oil Fields, had operated gas stations. In the very early days gasoline was a largely useless by-product of the refining process. Oil, kerosene, and paraffin were much more desirable products. But as automobiles became popular gasoline became very useful indeed. In 1920, there was even a (brief) gasoline shortage. The *Ventura Post* headlined that the price of gas had jumped to twenty-eight and twenty-nine cents per gallon. "In many places in the East the price is thirty-seven cents. . . it is intimated that the worst is yet to come."

During that shortage Ventura Refining always had gas for sale. Their stations with the yellow, red, white, and blue emblems were, Mr. Shiells said, among the few remaining open, even on Sundays. But Mr. Shiells real surprise was the location of one of the original Ventura Refining gas stations: at the intersection of Main and Santa Clara streets in Ventura. Though extensively remodelled, it still survives as an identifiable gas station, serving now as a locksmith's shop.

So my search for "The Ventura Oil Company" was successful—sort of. I'm still not sure why my father, a book seller from Boston, was working for a California oil company. But I suppose I shouldn't be too surprised. After leaving the petroleum business he became vice-president and general manager of the first commercial airfield

in southern California, on Fairfax Avenue south of Melrose (then a dirt road) in Los Angeles. One day two of his pilots, stunting for Harry Houdini's first movie, locked wings and made an unscheduled (!) landing in a coastal bean field. And now—I just can't help it—I wonder how I can find out *whose* bean field!

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[1]An historical resume of Oil Production in Ventura County, California (VCMRL)
[2]Walker's Manual of California Securities and Directory of Directors, 1916-1920 (LAPL)
[3]Mr. Copeland of the Halliburton Company, through whom T.W. Brown obtained the signs, referred to them as coming from a Halliburton camp at Norwalk.

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Sources:

California State Bureau of Gas and Oil
Ventura County Museum Research Library
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EVELYN FLEBBE SCOTT

by Jeanne Brown

Evelyn Flebbe, born in Massachusetts, was a direct descendant of the O'Briens of Machias, Maine, naval heroes of the American Revolution.

When she was five, Evelyn accompanied her mother, a successful author, to Hollywood to visit the mother of William and Cecil B. De Mille. The visit turned into a permanent move for the Flebbe family. Evelyn's mother became a screen writer for the De Mille studios and her father was Cecil B. De Mille's close business associate for many years.

Evelyn was educated at the Hollywood School for Girls and in France. For over 25 years she worked as a story analyst for David O. Selznick, RKO and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios.

She met her husband-to-be, David Scott, when he was starring in "The Road to Yesterday," a play written by her mother. Ursula Scott-Larsen, who now lives in Belgium, is their only child. However, these loving and kind people "adopted" an Iranian college student and financed him through the completion of his education for a doctoral degree.

Evelyn was the author of "Hollywood When Silents Were Golden", a memoir; and "The Story of Fourteen Bears," a children's book which has been translated into many languages. It is my personal wish that Ursula will follow the maternal tradition of her family and complete her mother's biography of Dorothy Arzner, a successful director in the early motion picture industry.

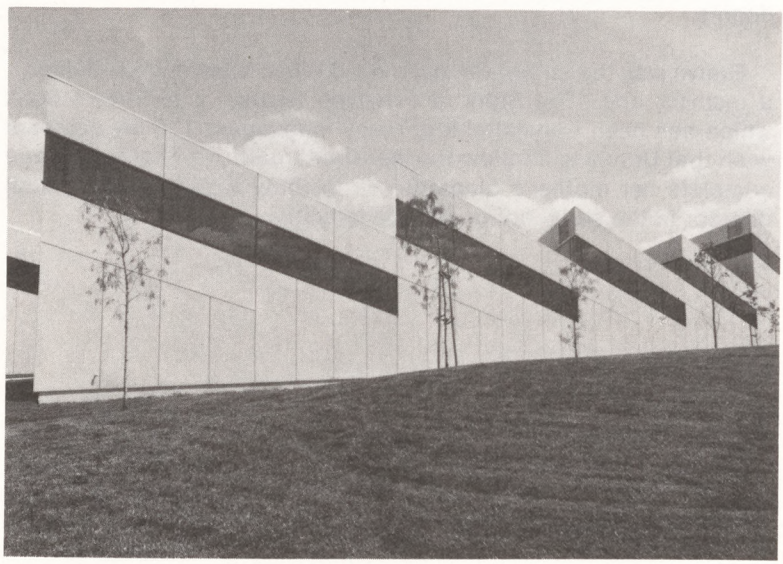
A HISTORY OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE CONEJO VALLEY

by Patricia A. Allen,
City Historian, City of Thousand Oaks, California

The dedication of the beautiful new Thousand Oaks Civic Library in January, 1982, prompted this research into the background and history of library services in the Conejo Valley.

The first librarians in the Conejo Valley were referred to as custodians of the books of the Ventura County Library and were frequently found tucked away in an unused corner of a local grocery store. It was not unusual for the custodian to do triple duty as the postmaster, storekeeper, and librarian.

Earliest records of the Ventura County Library indicate that the first Conejo Valley Library was in a general store in Newbury Park at the corner of Ventu Park and Newbury Roads. It was next door to the "Old Hotel"—now the Stagecoach Inn Museum. A photograph provided the first clue to its identity by showing an old library sign nailed to an exterior wall of the store. The owner also advertised the building, by means of other signs, as the Newbury Park Post Office, gas station, feed and seed outlet, and grocery store; plus, they could provide overnight campsites for weary travelers! The enterprising proprietor of this



The Thousand Oaks Civic Library was dedicated in January, 1982.

establishment was William F. Knowlton. He was a bachelor who shared his home with his sister, Sarah Eglantine Knowlton, known fondly for her diminutive stature as "Tiny".

Will Knowlton became postmaster in 1909 and was appointed custodian of the Newbury Park Library in 1917. He and Tiny took turns being postmaster, librarian, and storekeeper until 1921. Other members of their household included their father, the Reverend William Rosaldo Knowlton; and their widowed sister, Susan Knowlton Hays, and her two sons, Washie and Simie. Simie became the father of Reba Hays Jeffries and H. Allen Hays, who donated the old hotel building and four-acre site to the community.

Old-timers recall that Tiny Knowlton was courted by a timid gentleman of about her same small size for a period of twenty years. His decision to propose was no doubt delayed by the stern and forbidding countenance of her father. It is said that on their wedding night, the local citizens gathered to honor the newlyweds with an old-fashioned shivaree. The groom, Wiley Patton, was so overcome by this prospect that he quickly grabbed Tiny by the hand and practically dragged her to the old barn back of the hotel, where they spent the night hidden in the hay loft.

As the twentieth century progressed, the community began to shed its rowdy pioneer trappings, but it wasn't until the mid-1920s that the job of librarian was separated from other civic responsibilities.

Mrs. Louise R. Browning served as both the library custodian and postmaster from 1921 until 1924, at which time Mrs. Allie Roche took over the custodial duties of the library. Her husband, Louis Roche, was listed in the 1924 County Directory as a merchant and probably had taken over the Knowlton store. The Post Office was the responsibility of Lloyd V. Lewis from 1924 to 1931, at which time he was succeeded by Christina Lewis, presumably his wife.

In 1928, Mrs. Roche gave up the library position and the library was closed until 1932, when she resumed her duties for an additional five years. From 1937 to 1977, Newbury Park was served by a bookmobile from the Ventura County Library. In 1977, County Supervisor Ed Jones was instrumental in getting a new library for the patrons in Newbury Park. Mrs. Diana Gel-Passolas was appointed as the first professional librarian. The following year, Proposition 13 drastically cut funds available for professional librarians and Vivian Corral, an assistant librarian, was appointed to the position.

The Ventura County Library archives, researched by Betty Black, Coordinator of Community Libraries, indicate that the first library custodian in the newly created village of Thousand Oaks was Mrs. Lillian Northrup, who served in that capacity from February to August of 1924. She and her husband, Earl, and their son, Walter, and his wife, managed a small restaurant on the east end of what was then called Ventura Boulevard, now known as Thousand Oaks Boulevard. Mrs. Northrup's granddaughter, Jean Northrup Yanez, was born in April, 1924, and spent many of the first hours of her life sleeping in a basket under the counter at the restaurant while her mother, Grace Northrup, waited tables and her grandmother alternated between cooking meals and checking out books.

Anna Margaret and William Gentry. She maintained the library in their home from 1927 to 1934.

Book circulation figures were faithfully entered in 1925, 1926, and 1927, but there is no record of where the library was located. In 1927, Mrs. William Henry (Anna Margaret) Gentry took the library into her home. It was a new little house on Pleasant Way built for the Gentrys by their son-in-law, W.S. Donnelly. Mr. Donnelly built a home for his own family back-to-back with the Gentry's, facing Ventura Road. For many years he operated the Donnelly Garage at the site of what is now Cross Tires.

Mr. and Mrs. Gentry's home housed the library for seven years, from 1927 to 1934. During most of this time the "chief reader" was their granddaughter, Dorothy Donnelly. She must have been a voracious reader, for the circulation climbed from 119 in 1924 to 1,443 in 1934. Dorothy now resides in Port Angeles, Washington, and provided information and photographs concerning her grandparents' home.

Mrs. Louis (Bertha) Weston served as librarian from 1934 to 1937 in her home, located near what is today the Oakdale Market. Little is known of Mrs. Weston and her care of the library, except that the circulation increased by 250 books during the last year of her stewardship.

Mrs. Lloyd (Ethel) Smith took over the library in October, 1937, and kept it until February, 1946. She and her family lived in a house behind their gas station on Ventura Road. It may have been the old log house which once stood behind the Sizzler restaurant at the intersection of Rancho Road and Thousand Oaks Boulevard, but this has not been verified.

The next move of the Thousand Oaks library put it in the handsome stone and wood residence of Mrs. John (Myrtle) Vincent at the corner of Sunset Drive and Willow Lane in Old Town. The house has been well cared for and is still used as a private home. Mrs. Vincent later married Robert Locke.

Following a brief stay in the Vincent home, the library found its benefactor in the person of Mrs. Tom (Ethel) Nixon. Mr. and Mrs. Nixon operated a dry goods and western wear store at 3021 E. Ventura Road for many years. Ethel Nixon was truly the library's custodian, for she nurtured it lovingly until the growth of the community required that a library building be erected. The circulation jumped by 1,500 books in 1946, indicating the growth of the region. It continued to grow each of the fifteen years during which she served. In 1961, the year Mrs. Nixon retired, the new Conejo Library opened on Wilbur Road with a circulation of 16,492 books.

Site of the Thousand Oaks Library from 1946 to 1961.

Mrs. Nixon, a charming and gracious lady at the age of ninety-plus, was present at the dedication of the new Civic Library in January, 1982, and was honored by the community she had served so ably.

For over three-quarters of a century, the citizens of the Conejo Valley have been fortunate to receive the benefits that libraries provide—education, adventure, a window on the world. Through difficult times and prosperous times, the Library has continued to be a valuable community service. We should honor all the women and men who have made this service possible.

CORRECTION

The William P. Clark quoted in the Spring, 1984 *Quarterly* is the father of United States Secretary of the Interior William P. Clark.

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